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# DISCOURSES

ON

*Rev.  
from very little*

IMPORTANT AND INTERESTING SUBJECTS,

BEING THE SELECT WORKS

OF THE

REV. THOMAS WATSON,

LATE MINISTER OF ST. STEPHEN'S, WALBROOK, LONDON;  
AUTHOR OF THE 'BODY OF DIVINITY.'

"He being dead yet speaketh." *Heb. iv. 6.*

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## THE SAINT'S DESIRE

TO BE

## WITH CHRIST.

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PHILIP. i. 23. *For I am in a Strait betwixt Two, having a Desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better.*

**WE** are met to solemnize the funeral of our friend deceased, and to perform the last office of love. A glass of mortality is here set before us, wherein we may see our own fragil condition. There is a sentence passed upon us all;—‘it is appointed unto men once to die,’ Heb. ix. 27. so that our life is but a short reprieve from death, which is granted to a condemned man.

A wise man’s life, saith Plato, is nothing else but a contemplation of death. The Lord would have us inure ourselves to dying thoughts, Dent. xxxii. 20. and, as it were by meditation, often to stretch ourselves upon our death-bed. God clothed our first parents with skins of dead beasts, and feeds us with dead-flesh, that so often as we see the death of other creatures, we might not forget our own.

The text presents to us saint Paul in an holy pathos, or fit of longing to be with Christ. His heart was with Christ, and he wanted only the swift wing of death to carry him thither. ‘I am (saith he) in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better.’

I shall briefly explain the terms as they lie in order.

‘I am in a strait betwixt two.’

I am hemmed in; it may allude to a castle which is so straitly besieged and hemmed in, that it hath no way to make a sally out. It fared now with saint Paul, as with a woman that hath her children at home with her, and her husband beyond the seas, she would fain be with her husband, yet is loath to leave her children: So Paul would gladly have been with Christ, but was loath to leave the Philippians, his spiritual children.

‘Having a desire to depart.’

1. The Apostle doth not say, I must depart, but I desire to depart. All men must depart.

There is a dying principle in all; the frame and contexture of their body is earthly, and tends to a dissolution. Nebuchadnezzar’s image, though it had a head of gold, yet feet of clay, Dan. ii. 23. Take the strongest man, let him be Samson or Hercules, of him we may yet say, he stands upon feet of clay: he is but animated dust, and must moulder away in time; death will come with an *habeas corpus* at last. Tamerlane, a Scythian captain, the terror of his time, died with three fits of an ague.

The grammarian, who declines all other nouns, knows not how to decline death. ‘Is my strength, saith Job, the strength of stones?’ Job vi. 12. Suppose it were, yet the continual dropping of sickness would in time wear away this stone. There is no such thing as an earthly eternity; death is called ‘the house appointed for all living,’ Job xxx. 23.

But though death be in itself necessary, to saint Paul it was voluntary; it was not so much a debt, as a vote; not so much Paul’s task, as his choice; he doth not say, I must be dissolved, but I would be dissolved: ‘Having a desire to depart.’



2. The apostle doth not say, having a desire to die, but to depart; (a lenifying word) which doth much take off the sharp edge of death, and make it less formidable. This phrase [to depart] may refer,

1. To soldiers that pitch their tents in the field, and upon the least word of command from their general, loosen the cords of their tents, and pluck up the stakes and march forward. So death doth but 'loosen the silver cord' which fastened the soul in its earthly tent, and a Christian marcheth forward to the heavenly Canaan.

Or, 2. This word [to depart] may be a metaphor taken from mariners, who loosen anchor that they may sail from one port to another: so Paul desired to loosen anchor; death to a believer is but loosening the anchor, and sailing from one port to another, from earth to heaven.

Beza renders this word [to depart] a putting off the harness. The world is an inn, we are travellers who take up our lodging here for a night, Paul longed to be out of his inn,

'And to be with Christ.'

The apostle had three great desires, and they were all centred upon Christ. One was 'to be found in Christ,' Phil. iii. 9. the other was 'to magnify Christ,' Phil. i. 20. the third was 'to be with Christ,' Phil. i. 23.

Here observe two things.

1. Paul doth not say I desire to depart and be in heaven, but to be with Christ; it is Christ's presence makes heaven, as the king's presence makes the court. It is not the Cherubims or Seraphims which make paradise; 'the Lamb is the light thereof,' Rev. xxi. 23. ♪

2. From the connexion of the words, 'Having a desire to depart and to be with Christ; we clearly see that the soul of a believer doth not sleep in the body after death, (a drowsy opinion) but goes im-

mediately to Christ. Upon the divorce of the soul from the body, there follows an espousal of the soul to Christ, 2 Cor. v. 8. 'Absent from the body, present with the Lord.' It were better for believers to stay here, if they did not presently go to Christ after death: For here the saints are daily improving their graces, here they have many sweet tastes of God's love, so that it were better to stay here; and Paul wished that which would be to his loss, if the soul should sleep in the body, and not go immediately after death to Christ.

'Which is far better.'

A believer is no loser by death. His change is for the better; a scion that is grafted into a stock, and planted in a better soil, is no ways damnified. A believer after death is set into a better Stock, Christ; and is planted in a better soil, Heaven; this can be no loss, but an advantage. Well therefore may the apostle say, to be with Christ is far better.

In the words there are these three parts. 1. Saint Paul's choice; to be with Christ. 2. The excellency of his choice; it is far better. 3. The strait he was in; I am in a strait betwixt two; this holy man was in a great *dilemma*, he was straitened between service and reward. He was desirous of glory, yet willing to adjourn his own happiness, and stay out of heaven a while, that he might be a means to bring others thither.

From the words thus opened, there are three observations.

1. It is the desire of a true saint to remove from hence, and be with Christ.

2. To be with Christ is far better; how much better it is, we shall better understand when we are in heaven; some angel is best able to speak to this point.

3. That which stays a saint here in the world,

is a desire of doing service; this did cast the balance with the apostle, and was the only tempting motive to keep him here a while; he looked upon his abode in the flesh, as an opportunity of service. Paul was willing to die, yet content to live, that he might be a factor for Christ upon earth.

I shall at this time insist upon the first proposition. That it is the desire of a true saint to remove from hence, and be with Christ; this proposition hath two branches; of each distinctly.

1. It is the desire of a true saint to be gone from hence; 'having a desire to depart.' What a wicked man fears, that a godly man hopes for. I desire, saith Paul, to depart; a sinner cries loath to depart, he doth not say 'Come Lord Jesus,' but stay Lord Jesus; he would live always here, he knows no other heaven but this, and it is death to him to be turned out of his heaven. It was the speech of Axiochus the philosopher when he was to die, Shall I be deprived of this light? Shall I leave all my sweet delights? David calls death a going out of the world, Psal. xxxix. 13. A wicked man doth not go out, but is dragged out; he is like a tenant who hath gotten possession, and will not go out of the house, till the sergeants pull him out. If a wicked man were put to his choice, he would never come where God is; he would choose the serpent's curse, 'to eat dust,' Gen. iii. 14. but not return to dust. If a wicked man might have his wish, he would serve no other God but his belly, and to this he would ever liberally pour drink-offerings.

But a soul enlivened and ennobled with a principle of grace, looks upon the world as a wilderness wherein are fiery serpents, and he desires to get out of this wilderness. Simeon having taken Christ in his arms, cries out, 'Lord now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace,' Luke ii. 29. He that hath taken Christ in the arms of his faith, will

sing Simeon's song, Lord, let thy servant depart. David prayed to know the measure of his days, Psal. xxxix. 4. because, saith Theodoret, he desired to hear the good news of death's approach.

The saints of God have looked upon themselves as imprisoned in the body, and have longed for a jail-delivery.

The birds desire to go out of the cage, though it be made of gold.

Hilarion chides himself that he was not more willing to die; go forth my soul, what fearest thou?

Ignatius was desirous of martyrdom, that he might gain the presence of Christ in glory.

A Christian of the right breed is ambitiously desirous to put off the earthly clothes of his body, and make his bed in the grave; how is this bed perfumed with Christ's lying in it? a pillow of down is not so sweet as a pillow of dust; a regenerate person looking upon himself as held with the earthen fetters of the flesh, and his soul put into a moveable sepulchre, cries out with David, 'O that I had wings like a dove, that I might flee away and be at rest,' Psalm lv. 6.

And indeed no wonder a true saint doth desire a dismissal, and is so earnest to have his pass to be gone from hence, if we consider how beneficial death is to a child of God; it puts a period to all his evils: in particular there are ten evils that death will put an end to.

1. Death will put an end to a believer's sins. Sin is the great incendiary, it doth us all the mischief. Sin may be compared to the planet Saturn, which hath a malignant influence; it is the womb of our sorrows, and the grave of our comforts.

Sin is the sinner's bond, Acts. viii. 23. and the saint's burden, Psal. lxxxiii. 3. How is a believer tired out with his corruptions? I am weary 'of my life' saith Rebecca, 'because of the daughters of

Heth,' Gen. xxvii. 46. That which makes a child of God weary of his life, is his proud, unbelieving heart: St. Paul could better carry his iron chain than his sins; 'O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' Rom. vii. 24. When grace spurs the soul forward, the curbing bit of sin checks it, and pulls it back again. There is much of the old man in the new man; there is a party in every regenerate heart that is true to the devil; a party that will not pray, that will not believe. A christian is like a bowl with a double bias; he hath an earthly bias upon his will, and a spiritual bias, and these draw him several ways; 'The evil I would not, that do I,' Rom. vii. 19. Sin mingles itself with our holy things; we cannot act either our duties or our graces without sin; we are like children who cannot write without blotting! the sweet rose of grace doth not grow without its prickles. No wonder then a believer desires to depart; death will free him from his spiritual distempers; when he hath done breathing, he shall have done sinning.

2. Death will put an end to a believer's tentations. Our whole life, saith Austin, is nothing but a tentation; we tread upon snares: Satan is ever casting in the angle of a tentation, to see whether we will bite; he knows how to suit his tentations; he tempted Achan with a wedge of gold: he tempted David with beauty; we cannot lock the door of our heart so fast by prayer, but a tentation will enter: sometimes satan comes more furiously, as a red dragon; sometimes more slyly, as a serpent; sometimes he baits his hook with scripture, and tempts to sin under a mask of religion, as when he tempts to evil, that 'good may come of it.' Thus can he 'transform himself into an angel of light,' Rom. iii. 8.

Is it not a grievous thing for a virgin to have her



chastity assaulted? Is it not sad to have the devil's bullets continually flying about our ears? No wonder then a believer is willing to depart; death will set him out of gunshot, he shall never be troubled with Satan's fiery darts any more; though grace puts a child of God out of the devil's possession, it is death only frees him from the devil's tentation.

3. Death will put an end to a believer's fears. Fear is the soul's palsy; 'there is torment in fear,' Job iv. 18. Cicero calls fear one of the three plagues of mankind; and the best of the saints are haunted with this evil spirit; they cannot rejoice without trembling; the believer fears lest his heart should put a cheat upon him, he fears God doth not love him, he fears lest he should tire in his march to heaven; the best faith may sometimes have its fears, as the best stars have their twinkling. These fears, as Socrates saith, arm a man against himself; they are very afflictive, leaving sad impressions of melancholy behind. No wonder, then, a believer longs to depart out of this life: why should he fear that which frees him from fear? the king of terrors makes all fear vanish.

4. Death will dry up a believer's tears, Rev. vii. 17. 'And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes;' weeping is nothing but a cloud of sorrow gathered in the heart, dropping into water. A christian often hath none to keep him company, but his own griefs and sorrows; he sits as 'Israel by the rivers weeping;' as soon as the child is born, it weeps; when Moses was born, he was laid in an ark of bulrushes, where he did as it were baptize himself with his own tears, Exod. ii. 6. 'And behold the babe wept;' ever since we looked upon the tree of knowledge, our eyes have watered; there are many things to occasion weeping.

1. Our sins; who can look into his own heart with dry eyes?

2. Loss of relations, which is like the pulling a limb from the body; Joseph wept over his dead father, Gen. l. 1. Well then, is it not to be admired that a believer desires to depart from hence; he shall leave the valley of tears; the bottle of tears shall be stopped; his water shall be turned into wine, his mourning into music, his lamentations into hallelujahs; death is the handkerchief to wipe off all tears.

5. Death will put an end to a believer's molestations; 'Man is born to trouble,' Job v. 7. he is the natural heir to it. This life is subject to injury; we do not, as Seneca saith, finish our troubles while we live here, but change them. Every one hath his cross to carry; sometimes poverty pincheth, sometimes sickness tortures, sometimes lawsuits vex: man is like a tennis-ball, bandied up and down by providence; while wicked men are in the world, never look for rest. These troubled seas, as the prophet calls them, will be casting forth their foam and mire upon the godly; and well then may a believer say, 'Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart.' Death gives a child of God his *quies est*, Isa. lvii. 20. it sends him a writ of ease, Job iii. 17. 'There (that is in the grave) the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary be at rest.'

6. Death puts an end to a believer's cares. Care is vexatious and anxious, it eats out the comfort of life; the Greek word for care (*merimna*) comes from a primitive that signifies to cut the heart in pieces; care doth fret as a canker, it excruciates the mind, it breaks the sleep, it wastes the spirits, this is the rack which the soul is stretched upon. It is hard, I had almost said impossible, to shake off this viper of care while we live; all our comforts are careful comforts: care is to the mind as a burden to the back, it loads the spirits, and with overload-

ing sinks them ; care is a fruit of the curse ; Adam's want of care hath brought us to care ; have you not sometimes seen the briar growing by the honey-suckle ; so that you cannot well gather the honey-suckle but you are scratched with the briar ? Thus in gathering riches, how is the head and heart pricked with care ? and is there not great reason why a child of God should desire to depart ? is it good being among the briars ? death is the cure of care ; we are thoughtful and solicitous how to get such an estate, how to provide for such a child ; now death comes to a believer as a friend, and saith, Never perplex and distract thy mind thus, I will free thee from all these heart-killing cares ; I will strike but once, and that stroke shall relieve thee.

7. Death will put an end to the night of desertion ; thou ' didst hide thy face, and I was troubled,' Psal. xxx. 7. The soul in desertion is within an inch of despair ; in affliction the world is against a man, in temptation satan is against a man, in desertion God is against a man. Alstead calls desertion an agony of conscience ; this made the prophet Jonah call the whale's belly the belly of hell, because he was deserted there ; Jonah ii. 2, 4. ' Out of the belly of hell cried I, then I said I am cast out of thy sight.

Heman grew distracted upon the suspension of God's favour, Psal. lxxxviii. 16. ' While I suffer thy terrors, I am distracted ;' but death will free from desertion : a believer after death shall never see any more eclipses ; God will draw aside the curtain, and pull off his veil, and the soul shall be for ever sunning itself in the light of God's countenance.

8. Death will put an end to the imperfections of nature. Our natural knowledge is very imperfect ; the most perceptive, intelligent person, may say as Agur, Prov. xxx. 2. ' I have not the understanding

of a man.' Since the fall, the lamp of reason burns dim ; there are knots in nature that we cannot untie. Why Nilus should overflow in summer, when, by the course of nature, waters are lowest ; why the loadstone should incline to the polar star ; why the sea should be higher than the earth, yet not drown it ; ' How the bones grow in the womb,' Eccl. xi. 5. Many of these things are riddles and paradoxes ; by eating of the tree of knowledge, we have lost the key of knowledge ; now we are maimed in our intellectuals ! by the fall we have lost our head-piece ; there are some diseases which would make Galen's head ach to find out. The river Euripus was too deep for Aristotle.

Socrates said on his deathbed, there were many things which he had yet to learn ; our knowledge is like the twilight, dim and duskish : the greatest part of our knowledge, is not so much as the least part of our ignorance ; all which considered, no wonder to hear this language from a saint, ' I have a desire to depart ;' death crowns a christian with fulness of knowledge ; when he is snuffed by death, the candle of his understanding will burn brighter ; at death a child of God doth perfectly recover the use of his reason.

9. Death will put an end to the imperfections of grace ; our graces are our best jewels, but here they are in their infancy and minority : therefore the saints are said to receive but ' the first-fruits of the Spirit,' Rom. viii. 23. The best christian is like a child put out to nurse, he is very weak in grace ; faith is feeble, love lukewarm ; grace though it be not dead is sickly, Rev. iii. 2. ' Strengthen the things which are ready to die ;' grace is like gold in the ore, drossy and impure ; the most refined soul hath some dregs ; this motto may be written upon a christian's graces—*Plurima desunt*—he that shoots farthest in holiness, comes short of the mark

of perfection, Eccl. vii. 20. well then may a believer desire to be dissolved, death will free him from all the imperfections of his holiness; it will make him pure as the angels, not having spot or wrinkle, Eph. v. 27.

10. Death will put an end to a weary pilgrimage; we are here in a pilgrim condition, 1 Pet. ii. 11. A christian walks with his pilgrim's staff in his hand, the staff of the promise in the hand of faith; now death will put an end to this pilgrimage; it takes away the pilgrim's staff, and sets a crown upon his head: no wonder that the gracious soul cries out with saint Paul, 'having a desire to depart.'

*Obj.* But against this it may be objected—Some of the saints have prayed against death; Hezekiah, when the message of death was brought, prayed against it, and 'wept sore,' Isa. xxxviii. 2, 3. so that Hezekiah had not a desire to depart.

*Ans.* 1. Hezekiah did not pray simply against death, but in a limited sense, at that time; there might be several reasons assigned why at that time death was not welcome to him.

As, 1. Hezekiah desired to live a while longer, that he might do more work for God, verse 38. 'The dead cannot praise thee?' intimating that if he had been then taken off by death, he was capable of doing God no more service; he was loath to be cut down till he had borne more fruit. Besides, had he then died in the infancy of reformation, the adversaries of God would have exulted, and made songs of triumph at his funeral.

2. Hezekiah was unwilling to die at that time, because he wanted issue. God had promised to David, 1 Kings viii. 25. that those of his line which were godly, should not want some of their seed to succeed them in the throne; now in this respect it was a great discomfort to Hezekiah to die childless;



for he might have thought himself no better than an hypocrite, inasmuch as God had promised issue to the kings of David's line that feared him. Upon these, and other considerations, Hezekiah might pray against death at that juncture of time.

And whereas it may be said that many of God's children are unwilling to die; I answer, a christian is a compounded creature, flesh and spirit, and from this composition there may be a conflict between the fear of death and the desire of death; but at last the spiritual part prevails; and as faith grows stronger, fear grows weaker; thus it was with Paul, having a desire to depart.

So much for the first branch of the doctrine, that it is the desire of a true saint to be gone from hence, ['having a desire to depart.']

2. I proceed now to the second branch of the doctrine, that it is a saint's desire to be with Christ. St. Paul longed to lie on that soft pillow where John the beloved disciple did, viz. the bosom of Jesus: There had been little comfort in departing, if the apostle had not put in this word, 'to be with Christ.' Death will make a glorious change to a believer; it is but crossing the dead sea, and he shall be with Christ. Death to a child of God is like the whirlwind to Elijah, it blew off his mantle, but carried the prophet up to heaven. So death is a boisterous wind which blows off the mantle of the flesh, (for the body is but the mantle the soul is wrapped in,) but it carries the soul up to Christ; the day of a believer's dissolution is the day of his coronation. Tho' death be a bitter cup, here is sugar at the bottom, it translates the soul of a believer to Christ; though the flesh calls death 'the last enemy,' 1 Cor. xv. 26. yet faith calls it the best friend, it brings a man to Christ, which is far better.

These words 'to be with Christ,' imply three things.

## 1. Intuition. 2. Fruition. 3. Duration.

1. To be with Christ implies, Intuition, 1 John iii. 2. 'We shall see him as he is;' here we see him as he is not: he is not mutable, he is not mortal; in heaven we shall see him as he is. When Socrates was to die, he comforted himself with this, that he should go to the place where he should see Homer and Musæus, and other worthies who lived in the ages before him. A believer may comfort himself with this, that he shall see Christ; here we see him but through a glass, darkly; but what will it be when he shall be bespangled in all his embroidery, and shall shew forth himself in his full glory to his saints! He in Lucian said to his friend, I will shew thee all the glory of Greece; when thou hast seen Solon, thou hast seen all: So he that sees Jesus Christ, sees all the glory of paradise, Christ being the mirror of beauty, the quintessence of happiness.

Some ask the question, how and in what manner we shall see Christ, whether we shall see his Godhead with bodily eyes? It is not good to be wise above what is written; thus far I think may with modesty be asserted, that we shall, with our bodily eyes, behold Christ's human nature. His glory as a Mediator shall be visible to the saints, and shall be beheld by glorified eyes; in this sense that scripture is to be understood, Job xix. 25. 'With these eyes shall I see God;' great and amazing will that glory be which shall sparkle from the human nature of Christ; if his transfiguration was so glorious, what will his inauguration be! Austin wished that he might have seen three things before he died; Paul in the pulpit, Rome in its glory, and Christ in the flesh; but what were that to this sight of Christ in heaven? we shall behold not a crucified body, but a glorified body.

2. To be with Christ, implies Fruition; we shall

not only see him, but enjoy him : therefore in scripture the saints are said not only to behold him, but to be glorified with him, Rom. viii. 17. and glory is said not only to be revealed to us, but in us; Rom. xviii. 8. And 'Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord,' Matt. xxv. 21. not only see it, but enter into it. A man may see a fair arbour drawn up on the wall, but he cannot enter into it; this glory of heaven may be entered into; as the sponge sucks in the wine, so there shall be a libation and sucking in of glory; from this fruition of Christ, a torrent of divine joy will flow into the soul.

3. To be with Christ implies duration, 1 Thess. iv. 17. 'So shall we ever be with the Lord;' the fashion of the world passeth away, 1 Cor. vii. 31. Earthly comforts though they may be sweet, they are swift; Plutarch reports of Alexander, that he caused to be painted on a table a sword within a wheel, implying, that what he had gotten by his sword, was subject to be turned about with the wheel of providence; if we had the longest lease of these things, it would soon be run out; but this privilege of being with Christ, runs parallel with eternity: 'so shall we be ever with the Lord.'

*Use 1. Inform. Branch 1.* See from hence the difference between a believer's departing, and a wicked man's departing; to a believer it is an happy departing, to a wicked man it is a sad departing, there is nothing but departing; he departs out of this life, and he departs from Christ, 'depart from me ye cursed;' he departs from beams of glory, into flames of fire; he departs from the society of angels, into the fellowship of devils, Matt. xxv. 41. He hath never done departing; the wicked shall be ever consuming, yet never consumed; they may tremble to think of departing; well may the mourners go about the street when a wicked man dies;

hell may rightly be called *Bochim*, the place of weepers, *Matt. vii. 12.*

*Branch 2.* See how little cause a child of God hath to fear death, when it carries him to Christ. This is a death-bed cordial; we are naturally possessed with a strange kind of palpitation and trembling at the thoughts of death, as if we were in a shaking palsy, whereas there is nothing more really advantageous to a Christian; death is a bridge that leads to the paradise of God; all the hurt that death doth to a believer, is to carry him to Christ, and is not that far better? death pulls off the rags of the body and puts Christ's robes upon the soul. The serious consideration of this would make a believer above the desire of life, and the fear of death.

*Obj.* But may a child of God say, I could rejoice at the Gain of death, but I fear the Pain of death. I desire the haven, but I tremble at the voyage.

*Ans. 1.* In other cases we do not refuse pain; there is pain in the setting of a bone, in the lancing of a sore, yet we endure the pain contentedly, because it is in order to a cure. Death is an healing thing, it will cure a Christian of all his wounds: by making one issue, it cures all the rest.

Do we endure no pain at all in our life? Job felt so many miseries, that he did choose rather to die than to live, *Job vii. 5, 15.* 'My flesh is clothed with worms, my skin is broken and become loathsome, so that my soul chooseth strangling, and death rather than life;' the life of man is a continual catastrophe, and is interwoven with miseries: some have felt more pain in their life, than others have at their death.

3. What are a few pangs of death compared with the pangs of a guilty conscience, or with the flames of hell, which God hath freed a believer from? how light is death, compared with the weight of glory? *1 Cor. iv. 17.* how short, in respect of eternity? 'the

present suffering is not worthy of the glory which shall be revealed in the children of God.' Rom. viii. 18.

4. We make death more than it is; as the Moabites thought the waters had been blood, when they received only a colour and tincture from the sun-beams, 2 Kings iii. 32. we fancy death worse than it is, we look upon it through a multiplying glass; fear makes a Christian see double; shut the eye of sense and open the eye of faith, and death will appear less formidable.

*Use 2. Trial.* Let us then put ourselves upon a scrutiny and trial whether we are persons that shall go to Christ when we die; it is certain we shall depart, but the question is, whether shall we go to Christ?

*Quest.* How may that be known?

*Ans.* If we are in Christ while we live, we shall go to Christ when we die; union is the ground of privilege; we must be in Christ before we can be with Christ; many hope to go to Christ when they die, but they are not in Christ; are they in Christ that do not know him? are they in Christ that hate him in his ministers, in his ordinances? O labour to be in Christ.

*Quest.* How is that?

*Ans.* By faith; faith is the uniting grace; it is the vital, radical, cardinal grace; this gives the interest. Faith is the queen of the graces; by faith we take Christ as a husband, and give up ourselves to him as a Lord; faith is a Christ appropriating grace; it hath both a relying and an applying faculty; Christ is the ring, faith is the finger that puts on this ring; faith opens the orifice in Christ's sides, and drinks his blood; faith is both justifying and sanctifying; it fetcheth blood out of Christ's sides to pardon, and water out of his sides to purge, † John v. 6. O with all gettings get faith.



*Quest.* But there is much deceit about this grace ; The Cyprian diamond, saith Pliny, looks like the true Indian diamond, but it is not of the right kind, it will break with the hammer. The devil hath his bad wares and counterfeit graces to put off ; how therefore shall we know a true faith from a false and spurious ?

*Ans.* I shall give you two different notes.

1. True faith is ever found in an heart deeply humbled for sin, Acts ii. 37. ' They were pricked at their hearts ; ' here was the first budding of faith ; you never saw a flower grow out of a stone, nor faith out of an heart of stone. Faith is an herb that grows always in a moist soil, in a weeping eye and a broken heart, Mark ix. 24. ' The father of the child cried out with tears, Lord I believe.' This flag of faith grows in the water.

2. True faith is operative : The lapidaries say there is no precious stone but hath some virtue latent in it, so we may say of precious faith, it hath hidden virtue in it, it is very operative, it works out sin, Acts xv. 9, It works by love, Gal. v. 6. it is full of good works, James ii. 17. it makes the tongue speak for Christ, the head study, the hands work, the feet run ' in the ways of his commandments ; ' faith comes with power upon the heart, 2 Thess. i. 11, ' The work of faith with power : ' it hath a restraining and constraining power ; by this we may know whether ours be a true faith or no. I have read of a father who had three sons, and being to die, he left in his will all his estate to that son who could find his ring with the jewel which had a healing virtue ; the case was brought before the judges ; the two elder sons counterfeited a ring, but the younger son brought the true ring, which was proved by the virtue of it, whereupon his father's estate went to him : to this ring I may compare faith ; there is a counterfeit faith in the world,

but if we can find this ring of faith which hath the virtue in it, both purgative and operative, this is the true faith which doth interest us in and entitle us to Jesus Christ; and if we are in Christ while we live, we shall be with Christ when we die; where faith gives a propriety, death gives a possession.

*Use 3. Comfort.* Here then is comfort in the death of our religious friends, though they depart from us, yet they go to Christ, which is far better; we should mourn for them who are living, yet dead in sin; and rejoice for them who are dead, yet live with Christ: This our dear brother interred\*, had holy pangs of desire which seemed no less strong than the pangs of death; he panted after God as his ultimate and supreme perfection; he did often with joy repeat the words of the text, and seemed to roll them as honey under his tongue; we may therefore entertain good hopes of him that is placed in that paradise of God which he thirsted after. I wished him to look up to the merits of Christ; I must, saith he, rest there or no where.

O what a comfort is this to think that our friends are not only 'taken away from the evil to come,' Is. lvii. 1. but that they are with Christ! why should we be sad at their preferment? They have their crown, 2 Tim. iv. 8. their throne, Rev. iii. 21. their white robes, Rev. vii. 9. Why should we weep immoderately for them who have 'all tears wiped from their eyes? they enter into the joy of their Lord;' and why should we be swallowed up of grief for them who are swallowed up of joy! they that die in the Lord are not lost, but sent a little before; we shall shortly overtake them. It is but a while when godly friends shall meet in heaven, and feast together at 'the supper of the Lamb.' Rev. xix. 9. It is but a while when the saints shall lie together in

\* Preached at the Funeral of Mr. Jacob Stock.

Christ's bosom, that hive of sweetness, that bed of perfume. 'Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord.' Rev, xiv. 13. Why should we mourn excessively for them who are blessed? O let us not weep at the felicity of our friends, but rather long 'to depart, and be with Christ,' when we shall 'drink of these rivers of pleasures which run at his right hand for evermore.'

## DISCOURSES

UPON

### CHRIST'S SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

MATT. v. 1, 2. *And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain : and when he was set, his disciples came unto him,*

*And he opened his mouth, and taught them.*

## CHAP. I.

*The Introduction to the ensuing Discourse.*

THE blessed evangelist saint Matthew, the penman of this sacred history, was at first by profession a publican or gatherer of toll ; and Christ having called him from the custom-house, made him a gatherer of souls. This holy man in the first chapter sets down Christ's Birth and Genealogy, in

the second his dignity; a star ushers in the wise men to him, and as a king, he is presented with 'gold, and frankincense and myrrh,' ver. 9, 11. In the third chapter the evangelist records his Baptism; in the fourth his Tentations; in the fifth his Preaching; which chapter is like a rich mine, every vein hath some gold in it. There are four things in this chapter which offer themselves to our view.

1. The Preacher. 2. The Pulpit. 3. The Occasion. 4. The Sermon.

1. The Preacher, Jesus Christ, The best of preachers.

*He went up.* He, in whom there was a combination of virtues, a constellation of beauties; He whose lips were not only sweet as the honey-comb, but did drop as the honey-comb; his words an oracle, his works a miracle, his life a pattern, his death a sacrifice; 'He went up into a mountain and taught.' Jesus Christ was every way ennobled and qualified for the work of the ministry.

1. Christ was an intelligent preacher. He had 'the Spirit without measure,' John iii. 34. and knew how to speak a word in due season, when to humble, when to comfort. We cannot know all the faces of our hearers, Christ knew the hearts of his hearers, he understood what doctrine would best suit with them; as the husbandman can tell what sort of grain is proper for such a soil.

2. Christ was a powerful preacher. 'He spake with authority,' Matt. vii. 29. He could set men's sins before them, and shew them their very hearts, John iv. 29. 'Come see a man which told me all things which ever I did.' That is not the best glass which is most richly set with pearl, but that which shews the truest face; Christ was a preacher to the conscience, he breathed as much zeal as eloquence: he often touched upon the heart strings. What is said of Luther, is more truly applicable to Christ,

He spake as if he had been within a man. He could drive the wedge of his doctrine in the most knotty piece; he was able, with his two-edged sword, to pierce an heart of stone. 'Never man spake like this man,' John vii. 46.

3. Christ was a successful preacher; he had the art of converting souls, John x. 40. 'Many believed on him;' yea, persons of rank and quality, John xiii. 42. 'Among the chief rulers many believed.' He who had grace poured into his lips, Psal. xlv. 2. could pour grace into his hearers' hearts; he had the key of David in his hand, and when he pleased did open the hearts of men, and make way both for himself and his doctrine to enter. If he did blow the trumpet his very enemies would come under his banner, upon his summons none durst but surrender.

4. Christ was a lawful preacher; as he had his Unction from his Father, so his Mission, John viii. 18. 'The Father that sent me' bears witness of me. Christ (in whom were all perfections concentrated, yet) would be solemnly sealed, and inaugurated into his ministerial as well as mediatory office; If Jesus Christ would not enter upon the work of the ministry without a commission, how absurdly impudent are they who, without any warrant, dare invade this holy function? There must be a lawful admission of men into the ministry, Heb. v. 4. 'No man taketh this honour to himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.' Our Lord Jesus as he gave apostles and prophets which were extraordinary ministers, so pastors and teachers which were initiated and made in an ordinary way, Eph. iv. 11. and he will have a ministry perpetuated, Matt. xxviii. 20. 'Lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.' Sure there is as much need of ordination now, as in Christ's time and the time of the apostles, there being then ex-

traordinary gifts in the church which are now ceased.

*Obj.* 1. But why should not the ministry lie in common? 'Hath the Lord only spoken by Moses?' Numb. xii. 2. Why should not one preach as well as another?

*Ans.* Because God, who is the God of order, hath made the work of the ministry a select distinct office from any other. As in the body natural the members have a distinct office, the eye is to see, the hand to work; you may as well say, why should not the hand see as well as the eye? because God hath made the distinction, he hath put the visive faculty into the one, and not the other. So here, God hath made a distinction between the work of the minister and other work.

*Quest.* Where is this distinction?

*Ans.* 1. We find in scripture a distinction between pastor and people, 1 Pet. v. 2. 'The elders, or ministers, I exhort; feed the flock of God which is among you.' If any one may preach, by the same rule all may, and then what will become of the apostles' distinction? where will the flock of God be if all be pastors?

2. God hath cut out the minister's work which is proper for him, and doth not belong to any other, 1 Tim. iv. 13. 'Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine, give thyself wholly to them;' or as it is in the Greek, 'be thou wholly in them.' This charge is peculiar to the minister, and doth not concern any other. It is not spoken to the tradesman that he should give himself wholly to doctrine and exhortation, no, let him look to his shop; it is not spoken to the ploughman that he should give himself wholly to preaching, no, let him give himself to his plough. It is the minister's charge; the apostle speaks to Timothy, and in him to the rest who had the hands of the presbytery laid

on them; and 2 Tim. ii. 15. 'Study to shew thyself approved, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.' This is spoken peculiarly to the minister. Every one that can read the word aright, cannot divide the word aright: so that the work of the ministry doth not lie in common, it is a select, peculiar work. As none might touch the ark but the priests, none may touch this temple-office but such as are called to it.

*Obj.* 2. But if a man hath gifts, is not this sufficient? I answer no; as grace is not sufficient to make a minister, so neither gifts. The scripture puts a difference between gifting and sending, Rom. x. 15. 'How shall they preach unless they be sent?' If gifts were enough to constitute a minister, the apostle should have said, How shall they preach unless they be gifted? but he saith, unless they be sent; as in other callings, gifts do not make a magistrate: the attorney that pleads at the bar may have as good gifts as the judge that sits upon the bench, but he must have a commission before he sits as judge. If it be thus in matters civil, much more in ecclesiastical and sacred; which are things of the highest importance. Those therefore that do usurp the ministerial work without any special designation and appointment thereto, do discover more pride than zeal. They act out of their sphere; and are guilty of thievery; they steal upon a people; and as they came without a Call, so they stay without a blessing. Jer. xxiii. 32. 'I sent them not, therefore they shall not profit this people at all.' And so much for the first, the Preacher.

2. The Pulpit where Christ preached: 'He went up into a mountain.'

The law was at first given on the mount; and here Christ expounds it on the mount. This mount, as is supposed by Hierom and others of the learn-

ed, was mount Tabor. It was a convenient place to speak in, being seated above the people, and in regard of the great confluence of hearers.

8. The Occasion of Christ's ascending the mount; 'Seeing the multitude.'

The people thronged to hear Christ, and he would not dismiss the congregation without a sermon, but 'seeing the multitude he went up.' Jesus Christ came from heaven as a factor for souls; he lay legend here a while, preaching was his business; the people could not be so desirous to hear, as he was to preach; he who did compassionate faint bodies, Matt. xv. 32. did much more pity dead souls, it was his meat and drink to do his Father's will, John iv. 34. And seeing the multitude, he goes up to the mount and preacheth. This he did not only for the consolation of his hearers, but the imitation of his ministers.

From whence observe: *Doct.* That Christ's ministers, according to Christ's pattern must embrace every opportunity of doing good to souls; praying, and preaching, and studying must be our work, 2 Tim. iv. 2. 'Preach the word, be instant in season, out of season.' Peter seeing the multitude, lets down the net, and at one draught catcheth three thousand souls, Acts ii. 41. How zealously industrious have God's champions been in former ages, in fulfilling the work of their ministry; as we read of Chrysostom, Austin, Basil, the great Calvin, Bucer, and others, who for the work of Christ were nigh unto death. The reasons why the ministers of Christ, according to his pattern, should be ambitiously desirous of all opportunities for soul-service, are

1. Their Commission: God hath entrusted them as ambassadors, 2 Cor. v. 20. Now you know an ambassador waits for a day of audience, and as soon as a day is granted, he doth faithfully and impar-



tially deliver the mind of his prince : thus Christ's ministers having a commission delegated to them to negotiate for souls, should be glad when there is a day of audience, that they may impart the mind and will of Christ to his people.

2. Their Titles. 1. Ministers are called God's seedsmen, 2 Cor. ix. 11. therefore they must, upon all occasions, be scattering the blessed seed of the word : 'The sower must go forth and sow ;' yea, though the seed fall upon stones, as usually it doth, yet we must disseminate and scatter the seed of the word upon stony hearts, because 'even of these stones God is able to raise up children' to himself. 2. Ministers are called Stars, therefore they must shine by word and doctrine in the firmament of the church. Thus our Lord Christ hath set them a pattern in the text : 'Seeing the multitude, he went up into the mountain ;' here was a light set upon an hill ; the bright Morning star shining to all that were round about. Christ calls his ministers 'the light of the world,' Matt. v. 14. therefore they must be always giving forth their lustre ; their light must not go out till it be in the socket, or till violent death as an extinguisher put it out.

3. Christ's ministers must catch at all occasions of doing good to others, in regard of the work which they are about, and that is saving of souls ; what a precious thing is a soul ? Christ takes as it were a pair of scales in his hands, and he puts the world in one scale, and the soul in the other, and the soul outweighs : Matt. xvi. 26. The soul is of a noble original, of a quick operation ; it is a flower of eternity ; *here* in the bud ; *in heaven*, fully ripe and blown. The soul is one of the richest pieces of embroidery that ever God made : the understanding bespangled with light, the will invested with liberty, the affections, like musical instruments, tuned with

the finger of the Holy Ghost. The soul is Christ's partner, the angels' familiar? now if the souls of men are of so noble an extract, and made capable of glory, O how zealously industrious should Christ's ministers be to save these souls! If Christ did spend his blood for souls, well may we spend our sweat: It was Austin's prayer, that Christ might find him at his coming either praying or preaching: What a sad sight is it to see precious souls as so many pearls and diamonds cast into the dead sea of hell.

4. The ministers of Christ 'seeing the multitude,' must 'ascend the mount,' because there are so many emissaries of Satan who lie at the catch to subvert souls: How doth the old serpent cast out of his mouth floods of water after 'the woman to drown her?' What floods of heresy have been poured out in city and country, which have overflowed the banks, not only of religion, but civility. Ignatius calls error the invention of the devil; and Bernard calls it a sweet poison: men's ears, like sponges, have sucked in this poison: never were the devil's commodities more vendible in Britain than now; a fine tongue can put off bad wares; the Jesuit can silver over his lies, and dress error in truth's coat; a weak brain is soon intoxicated; when flattery and subtilty meet with the simple, they easily become a prey: The Romish whore enticeth many to drink down the poison of her idolatry and filthiness, because it is given in a golden cup, Rev. xvii. 4. If all who have the plague of the head should die, it would much increase the bill of mortality; now if there be so many emissaries of satan abroad, who labour to make proselytes to the church of Rome, how doth it concern them whom God hath put into the work of the ministry, to bestir themselves, and lay hold of all opportunities, that by their spiritual antidotes they may 'convert sinners from the error of their way, and save their souls from death.'

**James v. ult.** Ministers must not only be pastors, but praeliators; in one hand they must hold the bread of life, and 'feed the flock of God;' in the other hand, they must hold the sword of the Spirit, and fight against those errors which carry damnation in their front.

5. The ministers of Christ should wait for all opportunities of soul-service, because the preaching of the word hath so many *remoras* that hinder the progress and success of it; never did pilot meet with so many Euroclydons and cross winds in a voyage, as the spiritual pilots of God's church do when they are transporting souls to heaven.

1. Some hearers have bad memories, Jam. i. 25. Their memories are like leaking vessels; all the precious wine of holy doctrine that is poured in, runs out presently: ministers cannot by study find a truth so fast as others can lose it; If the meat doth not stay in the stomach, it can never breed good blood; if a truth delivered doth not stay in the memory, we can never be, as the apostle saith, 'Nourished up in the words of faith,' 1 Tim. iv. 6. How often doth the devil, that fowl of the air, pick up the good seed that is sown! If thieves steal away people's money, they tell every one, and make their complaint they have been robbed; but there is a worse thief they are not aware of! How many sermons hath the devil stolen from them? How many truths have they been robbed of, which might have been so many deathbed cordials! now if the word preached slides so fast out of the memory, ministers had need the oftener go up the preaching mount, that at last some truth may abide, and be as a nail fastened by the masters of assemblies.

2. The ears of many of our hearers are stopped with earth, I mean the cares of the world, that the word preached will not enter; according to that in the parable, 'Hearing they hear not,' Matt. xiii.

13. We read of Saul, 'his eyes were open, yet he saw no man,' Acts ix. 8. A strange paradox! and is it not as strange that men's ears should be open yet 'in hearing hear not?' They mind not what is said: Ezek. xxxiii. 31. 'They sit before thee as my people sitteth, but their heart goeth after their covetousness.' Many sit and stare the minister in the face, yet scarce know a word he saith; they are thinking of their wares and drugs, and are often casting up accounts in the church. If a man be in a mill, though you speak never so loud to him, he doth not hear you for the noise of the mill. We preach to men about matters of salvation, but the mill of worldly business makes such a noise, that they cannot hear; 'In hearing they hear not.' It being thus, ministers who are called *sons of thunder*, had need often ascend the mount, and 'lift up their voice like a trumpet;' that the deaf ear may be syringed and unstopped, and may 'hear what the Spirit saith to the churches,' Rev. ii. 7.

3. Others, as they have earth in their ears, so they have a stone in their hearts, Zech. vii. 12. 'They made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law.' The ministers of Christ therefore must be frequently brandishing the sword of the Spirit, and striking at men's sins, that if possible, they may at last pierce the heart of stone. When the earth is scorched with the sun, it is so hard and crusted together, that a shower of rain will not soften it; there must be shower after shower before it will be either moist or fertile; such an hardened piece is the heart of man naturally; it is so stiffened with the scorplings of lust, that there must be 'precept upon precept,' Isa. xxviii. 10. Our doctrine must 'distil as the dew, as the small rain on the tender herb, and the showers upon the grass,' Deut. xxxii. 2.

6. Christ's ministers, according to the example

of their Lord and Master, should take all occasions of doing good, not only in regard of God's glory, but their own comfort. What triumph is it, and cause of gladness, when a minister can say on his deathbed, 'Lord, I have done the work which thou gavest me to do,' I have been trading for souls! When a minister comes to the mount of glory, the heavenly mount, it will be a great comfort to him that he hath been so often upon the preaching mount. Certainly if the angels in heaven rejoice at the conversion of a sinner; Luke xv. 7. how shall that minister rejoice in heaven over every soul that he hath been instrumental to convert? every convert gained, as it shall add a member to Christ's body, so a jewel to a minister's crown, Dan. xii. 3. 'They that are wise,' or as the original carries it, 'They that are teachers shall shine (not as lamps or tapers, but) as stars;' not as planets, but fixed stars in the firmament of glory for ever.

And though Israel be not gathered, yet shall God's ministers 'be glorious in the eyes of the Lord,' Isa. xlix. 5. God will reward them, not according to their success, but their diligence. When they are a savour of death to men, yet they are a sweet savour to God. In an orchard the labourer that fells a tree, is rewarded as well as he that plants a tree; the surgeon's bill is paid though the patient die.

### SECT. 1.

*Use 1.* Let me crave liberty to speak a word to the Elishas, my reverend and honoured brethren in the ministry. You are engaged in a glorious service. God hath put great renown upon you; he hath entrusted you with two most precious jewels, his Truths and the Souls of his people; never was this honour conferred upon any angel to convert souls;

What princely dignity can parallel this? The pulpit is higher than the throne; for a truly constituted minister represents no less than God himself, 2 Cor. v. 20. 'As though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.' Give me leave to say as the apostle, Rom. xi. 13. 'I magnify my office.' Whatever our persons are, the office is sacred: the ministry is the most honourable employment in the world; Jesus Christ hath graced this calling by his entering into it; other men work in their trade, ministers work with God, 1 Cor. iii. 9. 'We are labourers together with God.' O high honour! God and his ministers have one and the same work, they both negotiate about souls: let the sons of the prophets wear this as their crown and diadem; but while I tell you of your dignity do not forget your duty: imitate this blessed pattern in the text, the Lord Jesus, 'who seeing the multitude, he went up and taught.' He took all occasions of preaching; sometimes he taught in the temple, Mark xiv. 49. sometimes in a ship, Mark iv. 1. and here upon the mount; his lips were a tree of life that fed many: how often did he neglect his food, that he might feast others with his doctrine! Let all the ministers of Christ tread in his steps; make Christ not only your Saviour, but your Samaritan; suffer no opportunities to slip wherein you may be helpful to the souls of others; be not content to go to heaven yourselves, but be as the *primum mobile*, which draws other orbs along with it; be such shining lamps, that you may light others to heaven with you: I will conclude with that of the apostle, 1 Cor. xv. 58. 'Therefore my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.'

## SECT. 2.

*Use 2. Branch 1.* Let me turn myself to the flock of God ; If ministers must take all opportunities to preach, you must take all opportunities to hear. If there were twice or thrice a week a certain sum of money to be distributed to all comers, then people would go thither ; now think thus with yourselves, when the word of God is preached ; the bread of life is distributed, which is more precious ' than thousands of gold and silver,' Psal. cxix. 72. In the word preached, heaven and salvation is offered to you ; in this field ' the Pearl of price' is hid : How should you ' flock like doves' to the windows of the sanctuary ! Isa. lx. 8. We read, ' the gate of the temple was called beautiful,' Acts iii. 2. The gate of God's house is the beautiful gate, lie at ' these posts of wisdom's doers,' Prov. viii. 34.

*Branch 2.* Not only hear the word preached, but encourage those ministers who do preach. 1. By liberal maintaining of them. Though I hope all who have God's Urim and Thummim written upon them can say as the apostle, 2 Cor. xii. 14. ' I seek not yours but you ;' yet that scripture is still canonical, 1 Cor. ix. 14. ' So hath the Lord ordained, that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.' Are not labourers in a vineyard maintained by their labours, saith Peter Martyr ; and the apostle puts the question, ' Who plants a vineyard and eateth not the fruit of it ?' 1 Cor. ix. 7. Hypocrites love a cheap religion ; they like a gospel that will put them to no charges ; they are content so they may have golden bags, to have wooden priests. How many, by saving their purses, have lost their souls ! Julian the apostate robbed the ministers, pretending conscience ; I need not tell you how vengeance pursued him. Is it not pity the fire on God's

altar should go out for want of pouring on a little golden oil? David would not offer that to God which 'cost him nothing,' 2 Sam. xxiv. 24.

2. Encourage God's ministers by your fruitfulness under their labours; when ministers are upon the mount, let them not be upon the rocks. What cost hath God laid out upon this city! never, I believe, since the apostles' times, was there a more learned, orthodox, powerful ministry than now: God's ministers are called Stars, Rev. i. 20. In this city every morning a star appears, besides the bright constellation on the Lord's day: O you that feed in the green pastures of ordinances, be fat and fertile; you that are planted in the courts of God, 'flourish in the courts of God,' Psal. xcii. 13. How sad will it be with a people that shall go laden to hell with gospel-blessings! The best way to encourage your ministers, is, to let them see the travel of their souls in your new birth. It is a great comfort when a minister doth not only woo souls, but win souls, Prov. xi. 30. 'He that winneth souls is wise.' This is a minister's glory, 1 Thess. ii. 19. 'For what is our joy, or crown of rejoicing? are not even ye? A successful preacher wears two crowns, 'A crown of righteousness' in heaven, and 'a crown of rejoicing' here upon earth; 'Are not ye our crown?'

3. Encourage your ministers by praying for them. Their work is great, it is a work will take up their head and heart, and all little enough; it is a work fitter for angels than men. 'Who is sufficient for these things?' 1 Cor. ii. 16. O pray for them. Christ indeed when he ascended the mount, and was to preach, needed none of the people's prayers for him; he had sufficient stock by him, the divine nature to supply him; but all his under officers in the ministry need prayer. If saint Paul, who abounded in the graces of the Spirit, and su-



pernatural revelations, did beg prayer, 1 Thess. v. 25. then surely other ministers need prayer who pretend not to any such revelations. And pray for your ministers,

1. That God will direct them what to preach, that he will cut out their work for them, Jonah iii. 2. 'Go preach the preaching that I bid thee.' It is a great matter to preach suitable truths; these are acceptable words, Eccl. xii. 10.

2. Pray that God will go forth with their labours; or else 'they toil and catch nothing.' God's Spirit must fill the sails of our ministry. It is not the hand that scatters the seed which makes it spring up, but the dews and influences of heaven: so it is not our preaching, but the divine influence of the Spirit that makes grace grow in men's hearts: We are but pipes and organs, it is God's Spirit blowing in us that makes the preaching of the word by a divine enchantment allure souls to Christ. Ministers are but stars to light you to Christ, the Spirit is the loadstone to draw you. All the good done by our ministry, is *per virtutem et efficaciam Domini*. O then pray for us, that God will make his work prosper in our hands; this may be one reason why the word preached doth profit no more, because people pray no more; perhaps you complain the tool is dull, the minister is dead and cold; you should have whetted and sharpened him by your prayer; if you would have the door of a blessing opened to you through our ministry, you must unlock it by the key of prayer.

CHAP. II.

*Shewing that there is a Blessedness in Reversion.*

MATT. v. 3. *Blessed are the poor in Spirit.*

**H**AVING done with the occasion, I come now fourthly to the Sermon itself: 'Blessed are the poor in Spirit.' Christ doth not begin his sermon on the mount, as the law was delivered on the mount, with commands and threatenings; the trumpet sounding, the fire flaming, the earth quaking, and the hearts of the Israelites too for fear; but our Saviour, whose lips dropped as the honeycomb, begins with promises and blessings: so sweet and ravishing was the doctrine of this heavenly Orpheus, that like music, it was able to charm the most savage natures, yea, to draw hearts of stone to him. To begin, then, with this word, *Blessed*.

If there be any blessedness in knowledge, it must needs be in the knowledge of blessedness. For the illustration of this, I shall lay down two aphorisms or conclusions.

1. That there is a blessedness in reversion.

2. That the godly are in some sense already blessed:

1. That there is a blessedness in reversion: The people of God meet with many knotty difficulties, and sinking discouragements in the way of religion; their march is not only tedious, but dangerous, and their hearts are ready to despond: It will not be amiss therefore to set the crown of blessedness before them, to animate their courage, and to inflame their zeal. How many scriptures bring this olive-branch in their mouth, 'The tidings of blessedness' to believers! Matt. xxiv. 46. 'Blessed is that servant whom his Lord when he cometh shall

find so doing,' Matt. xxv. 34. 'Come ye blessed of my Father.' Blessedness is the perfection of a rational creature; it is the whetstone of a christian's industry the height of his ambition; the flower of his joy; blessedness is the desire of all men. Aquinas calls it the *ultimus finis*; this is the white every man aims to hit; to this centre all the lines are drawn.

*Quest.* Wherein doth blessedness consist?

*Ans.* Millions of men mistake both the nature of blessedness, and the way thither: some of the learned have set down two hundred eighty eight several opinions about blessedness, and all have shot wide of the mark. I shall shew wherein it doth not consist, and then wherein it doth consist.

### SECT. 1.

Wherein blessedness doth not consist: it doth not lie in the acquisition of worldly things; happiness cannot by any art of chemistry be extracted here: Christ doth not say, Blessed are the rich, or blessed are the noble; yet too many idolize these things: man by the fall hath not only lost his crown, but his head-piece. How ready is he to terminate his happiness in extrinsics? which makes me call to mind that definition which some of the heathen philosophers gave of blessedness; that it was to have a sufficiency of subsistence, and to thrive well in the world: and are there not many who go for Christians, that seem to be of this philosophical opinion? If they have but worldly accommodations, they are ready to sing a *requiem* to their souls, and say with that brutish fool in the gospel, 'Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thy ease,' Luke xii. 19. Alas, the tree of blessedness doth not grow in an earthly paradise. Hath not God cursed the ground for sin? Gen. iii. 17. yet many are digging for felicity here, as if

they would fetch a blessing out of a curse ; a man may as well think to extract oil out of a flint, or fire out of water, as blessedness out of these terrestrial things.

King Solomon arrived at more than any man ; he was the most magnificent prince that ever held the sceptre. 1. For his parentage ; he sprang from the royal line ; not only that line of which many kings came, but of which Christ himself came. Jesus Christ was of Solomon's line and race ; so that for heraldry and nobility none could shew a fairer coat of arms. 2. For the situation of his palace ; it was in Hierusalem, the princess and paragon of the earth. Hierusalem, for its renown, was called the City of God ; it was the most famous metropolis in the world. ' Whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord,' Psal. cxxii. 4. 3. For wealth ; his crown was hung full of jewels ; he had treasures of gold and pearl, and ' gave silver as stones,' 1 Kings x. 27. 4. For worldly joy, he had the flower and quintessence of all delights ; sumptuous fare, stately edifices, vineyards, fish-ponds, all sorts of music to enchant and ravish the senses with joy : if there were any rarity, it was a present for king Solomon's court ; thus did he bathe himself in the perfumed waters of pleasure. 5. For wisdom he was the oracle of his time ; when the queen of Sheba came to pose him with hard questions, he gave a solution to all her doubts : 1 Kings. x. 3. He had a key of knowledge to unlock nature's dark cabinet ; so that if wisdom had been lost, it was to be found here, and the whole world might have lighted their understanding at Solomon's lamp. He was an earthly angel ; so that a carnal eye, surveying his glory, would have been ready to imagine that Solomon had entered into that paradise out of which Adam was once driven, or that he had found another as good ; never did the world cast a more smiling aspect upon any man ; yet when he

comes to give in his impartial verdict, he tells us that the world hath Vanity written upon its frontispiece; and all those golden delights he enjoyed, were but a painted felicity, a glorious misery, Eccl. ii. 8. 'And behold all was vanity.' Blessedness is too noble and delicate a plant to dwell in nature's soil.

That blessedness doth not lie in externals, I shall prove by these five demonstrations.

1. Those things which are not commensurate to the desires of the soul, can never make a man blessed; but transitory things are not commensurate to the desires of the soul; therefore they cannot render him blessed; nothing on earth can satisfy, Eccl. v. 10. 'He that loveth silver, shall not be satisfied with silver;' riches are unsatisfying.

1. Because they are not real; the world is called a fashion, 1 Cor. vii. 31. Riches are but tinned over; they are like alchemy, which glisters a little in our eyes, but at death all this alchemy will be worn off. Riches are but sugared lies, pleasant impostures; like a gilded cover which hath not one leaf of true comfort bound up in it.

2. Because they are not suitable: the soul is a spiritual thing, riches are of an earthly extract, and how can these fill a spiritual substance? a man may as well fill his chest with grace, as his heart with gold; if a man were crowned with all the delights of the world, nay, if God should build him an house among the stars, yet the restless eye of his unsatisfied mind would be looking still higher, he would be prying beyond the heavens for some hidden rarities which he thinks he hath not yet attained to; so unquenchable is the thirst of the soul, till it come to bathe in the river of life, and to centre upon true blessedness.

2. That which cannot quiet the heart in a storm, cannot entitle a man to blessedness; but earthly

things accumulated, cannot rock the troubled heart quiet, therefore cannot make one blessed. If the spirit be wounded, can the creature pour in wine and oil into these wounds? If God sets on conscience, and it flies in a man's face, can worldly comforts take off this angry fury? Is there any harp to drive away the evil spirit? outward things can no more cure the agony of conscience, than a silken stocking can cure a gouty leg. When Saul was sore distressed, could all the jewels of his crown comfort him? if God be angry, whose 'fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him,' Nahum i. 6. Can a wedge of gold be a screen to keep off this fire? Ezek. vii. 19. 'They shall cast their silver in the streets; their silver and their gold shall not be able to deliver them in the day of the wrath of the Lord.' King Belshazzar was carousing and ranting it; 'he drank wine in the golden vessels of the temple,' Dan. v. 3; but when the fingers of a man's hand appeared, 'his countenance was changed,' ver. 6. his wine grew sour, his feast was spoiled with that dish which was served in upon the wall. The things of the world will no more keep out trouble of spirit than a paper sounce will keep out a bullet.

3. That which is but for a season, cannot make one blessed; but all things under the sun are but for a season, therefore they cannot enrich with blessedness: sublunary delights are like those meats which we say are a while in season, and then presently grow stale, and are out of request: 'The world passeth away,' 1 John ii. 17. Worldly delights are mingled; they may be compared to a flock of birds in the garden, that stay a little while, but when you come near to them, they take their flight and are gone. So 'riches make themselves wings, they fly away as an eagle towards heaven,' Prov. xxiii. 5. They are like a meteor that blazeth, but spends and annihilates; they are like a castle made

of snow, lying under the torrid beams of the sun : Austin saith of himself, When any preferment smiled upon him, he was afraid to accept of it, lest it should on a sudden give him the slip. Outward comforts are as Plato saith, like tennis-balls, which are bandied up and down from one to another ; had we the longest lease of worldly comforts it would soon be run out : Riches and honour are still fugitive, they pass away like a swift stream, or like a ship that is going full sail. While they are with us, they are going away from us ; they are like a posy of flowers, which withers while you are smelling to it ; like ice, which melts away while it is in your hand. The world, saith Bernard, cries out, " I will leave you and be gone ;" it takes its salute and farewell together.

4. Those things which do more vex than comfort, cannot make a man blessed : but such are all things under the sun, therefore they cannot have blessedness affixed to them : As riches are compared to wind, Hos. xii. 1. to shew their vanity, so to thorns, Matt. xiii. 17. to shew their vexation : thorns are not more apt to tear our garments, than riches are to tear our hearts ; they are thorns in the gathering, they prick with care ; and as they pierce the head with care of getting, so they wound the heart with fear of losing ; God will have our sweetest wine run dregs, yea, and taste of a musty cask too, that we may not think this is the wine of paradise.

5. Those things which (if we have nothing else) will make us cursed, cannot make us blessed ; but the sole enjoyment of worldly things will make us cursed ; therefore it is far from making us blessed : ' Riches are kept for the hurt of the owner,' Eccl. v. 13. Riches to the wicked, are fuel for pride : Ezek. xxviii. 5. ' Thy heart is lifted up because of thy riches ;' and fuel for lust : Jer. v. 7. ' When I

had fed them to the full, they then committed adultery.' Riches are a snare : 1 Tim. vi. 9. ' But they that will be rich fall into temptation, and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in perdition.' How many have pulled down their souls to build up an estate ! a ship may be so laden with gold that it sinks ; many a man's gold hath sunk him to hell. The rich sinner seals up money in his bag, and God seals up a curse with it. Hab. ii, 6. ' Wo to him that ladeth himself with thick clay.' Austin saith, that Judas for money sold his salvation, and the Pharisees bought their damnation ; so that happiness is not to be fetched out of the earth ; they who go to the creature for blessedness, go to the wrong box.

SECT. 2.

*Use 1.* If blessedness doth not consist in externals, then let us not place our blessedness here ; this is to seek the living among the dead ; as the angel told Mary concerning Christ, ' He is not here, he is risen,' Matt. xxviii. 6. So I may say of blessedness it is not here, it is risen, it is in an higher region : How do men thirst after the world, as if the pearl of blessedness did hang upon an earthly crown ? O saith one, if I had but such an estate, then I should be happy ! had I but such a comfort then I should sit down satisfied ? Well, God gives him that comfort, and lets him suck out the very juice and spirits of it ; but, alas, it falls short of his expectation, it cannot fill the *hiatus* and longing of his soul, which still cries give, give, Prov. xxx. 15. Just like a sick man, if, saith he, I had but such a meat, I could eat it ; and when he hath it, his stomach is bad, and he can hardly endure to taste it ; God hath put not only an emptiness, but bitterness into the creature, and it is good for us that



there is no perfection here, that we may raise our thoughts higher, to more noble and generous delights. Could we distil, and draw out the quintessence of the creature, we should say as once the emperor Severus, who grew from a mean estate to be head of the greatest empire in the world ; I have, saith he, run through all conditions, yet could never find full contentment.

### SECT. 3.

*Use 2.* To such as are cut short in their allowance, whose cup doth not overflow, but their tears ; Be not too much troubled ; remember these outward comforts cannot make you blessed ; you might live rich and die cursed ; you might treasure up an estate, and God might treasure up wrath : be not perplexed about those things ; the want whereof cannot make you miserable, nor the enjoyment make you blessed.

### SECT. 4.

Having shewn wherein blessedness doth not consist, I shall next shew wherein it doth consist. Blessedness doth stand in the fruition of the chief good. 1. It consists in fruition ; there must not be only possession, but fruition. A man may possess an estate yet not enjoy it ; he may have the dominion of it, but not the comfort ; as when he is in a lethargy, or under the predominancy of melancholy ; but in true blessedness there must be a sensible enjoyment of that which the soul doth possess. 2. Blessedness lies in the fruition of the chief good ; it is not every good makes a man blessed, but it must be the supreme good, and that is God, Psal. cxliv. 15. ' Happy is that people whose God is the Lord.' God is *quies animæ*, here the soul doth rest : Psal.

cxvi. 7. Now that only in which the soul doth acquiesce and rest, can make it blessed. The globe or circle, as is observed in mathematics, is of all others the most perfect figure, because the last point of the figure ends in that point where it began : So when the soul meets in God, whence it sprang, as its first original, then it is completely blessed. That which makes a man blessed, must have six qualifications or ingredients in it, and these are found nowhere, but in God the chief good.

1. In true blessedness there must be meliority ; that which fills with blessedness, must be such a good as is better than a man's self. If you would ennoble a piece of silver, it must be by putting something to it which is better than silver, as by putting gold or pearl to it : so that which doth ennoble the soul, and enrich it with blessedness, must be by adding something to it which is more excellent than the soul, and that is God ; the world is below the soul : it is but the soul's footstool ; therefore cannot crown it with happiness.

2. Another ingredient is delectability ; that which brings blessedness, must have a delicious taste in it, such as the soul is infinitely ravished with ; there must be in it spirits of delight, and quintessence of joys ; and where can the soul suck those pure comforts which do amaze it with wonder, and crown it with delight, but in God ? The love of God is an honey-comb, which drops such infinite sweetness and satisfaction into the soul, ' as is unspeakable, and full of glory,' 1 Pet. i. 8. A kiss from God's mouth puts the soul into a divine ecstasy, so that now it cries out, ' It is good to be here.'

3. The third ingredient into blessedness, is plenty ; that which makes a man blessed must not be too scanty : it is a full draught which quencheth the soul's thirst ; and where shall we find plenty but in Deity ? Psal. xxxvi. 8. ' Thou shalt make him

drink of the river of thy pleasures,' not drops but rivers. The soul bathes itself, and is laid as it were a steeping in the water of life; the river of paradise overflows, and empties its silver streams into the souls of the blessed.

4. In true blessedness there must be variety: plenty without variety is apt to nauseate; in God there is *all* fulness, Col. i. 19. What can the soul want but it may be had in the chief good? God is *bonum in quo omnia bona*; he is a sun, a shield, a portion, a fountain, a rock of strength, an horn of salvation; in God there is a complication of all excellencies; there are every moment fresh beauties and delights springing from God.

5. To make up blessedness there must be perfection; the joy must be perfect, the glory perfect, Heb. xii. 23. 'Spirits of just men made perfect.' If there be the least defect, it destroys the nature of blessedness as the least symptom of a disease takes away the right temperature of the body.

6. True blessedness must have eternity stamped upon it. Blessedness is a fixed thing, it admits of no change or alteration. God saith of every child of his, 'I have blessed him, and he shall be blessed.' As the sunshine of blessedness is without clouds, so it never sets. John x. 28, 'I give unto them eternal life.' 1 Thess. iv. 17, 'And so shall we ever be with the Lord.' Eternity is the highest link of the chain of blessedness: Thus we have seen that this diamond of blessedness is only to be found in the Rock of ages. 'Blessed are the people whose God is the Lord.'

#### SECT. 5.

*Use 1.* If there is such a blessedness in reversion, be convinced of the truth of this, set it down as an article of your faith. We live in times wherein

many are grown atheists, they have run through all opinions; and now of professors they are turned epicures; they have drunk in so much of the poison of error, that they are quite intoxicated, and fallen asleep, and begin to dream there is no such thing as a state of blessedness after this life; and this opinion is to them above the Bible. When men have the spiritual staggers, it sadly presageth they will die. O it is a dangerous thing to hesitate and waver about fundamentals; like Pythagoras, who doubted whether there was a God or no! so, whether there be a blessedness or no. Doubting of principles, is the next way to the denying of principles. Let it be a maxim with every good Christian, There is a blessedness in reversion, 'there remains a rest for the people of God,' Heb. iv. 9.

*Use 2.* Revolve this truth often in your mind; there are many truths swim in the brain, which do not sink into the heart, and those do us no good: Chew the cud: Let a Christian think seriously with himself, there is a blessedness feasible, and I am capable of enjoying it, if I do not lay bars in the way, and block up my own happiness. Though within I see nothing but guilt, without nothing but curses; yet there is a blessedness to be had, and to be had for me too in the use of means.

The serious meditation of this will be a forcible argument to make the sinner break off his sins by repentance, and sweat hard till he find the golden mine of blessedness; I say, it would be the break-neck of sin; how would a man offer violence to himself by mortification, and to heaven by supplication, that at last he may arrive at a state of blessedness. What, is there a crown of blessedness to boast upon my head? a crown hung with the jewels of honour, delight, magnificence; a crown reached out by God himself; and shall I by sin hazard this? can the pleasures of sin countervail

the loss of blessedness? what more powerful motive to repentance than this. Sin will deceive me of the blessing! If a man knew certainly that a king would settle all his crown-revenues on him after such a term of years would he offend that regal majesty, and cause him to reverse and alter his will? There is a blessedness promised to all that live godly. 1 John ii. 25. 'This is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life.' We are not excluded; but may come in for a child's part; now shall we by living in sin provoke God, and forfeit this blessedness! O what madness is this! well may the apostle call them 'foolish and hurtful lusts, 1 Tim. vi. 9. because every lust doth what in it lies to cut off the entail of mercy, and block up the way to happiness; every sin may be compared to the flaming sword, which keeps the heavenly paradise that the sinner cannot enter.

*Use 3.* Let us so deport ourselves, that we may express to others that we do believe a blessedness to come; and that is by seeking after an interest in God; for the beams of blessedness shine only from his face; it is our union with God the chief good that makes us blessed: Oh let us never rest till we can say, 'This God is our God for ever and ever,' Psal. xlviii. 11. Most men think because God hath blessed them with an estate therefore they are blessed; alas, God often gives these things in anger: he loads his enemies with gold and silver; as Plutarch reports of Tarpeia a vestal nun, who bargained with the enemy to betray the capitol of Rome to them, in case she might have the golden bracelets on their left hands, which they promised; and being entered into the capitol, they threw not only their bracelets, but their bucklers too upon her, the weight whereof pressed her to death. God often lets men have the golden bracelets, the weight whereof sinks them to hell: Oh let us get our

eyes fixed, and our hearts united to God the supreme good? this is to pursue blessedness as in a chase.

2. Let us proclaim to the world that we do believe a blessedness to come, by living blessed lives; walk as becomes the heirs of blessedness; a blessed crown and a cursed life will never agree. Many tell us they are bound for heaven, but they steer their course a quite contrary way; the devil is their pilot, and they sail hell-ward; as if a man should say he were going a voyage to the east, but sails quite westward. The drunkard will tell you he hopes for blessedness, but he sails another way; thou must go weeping to heaven, not reeling. The unclean person talks of blessedness, but he is fallen into that deep ditch, Prov. xxiii. 27. where he is like sooner to find hell than heaven. A beast may as well be made an angel, as an unclean person in his leprosy enter into the paradise of God. The covetous person, of whom it may be said, 'He is a worm, and no man,' Psal. xxii. 6. he is ever creeping in the earth, yet he would lay a claim to blessedness; but can earth ascend? shall a lump of clay be made a bright star in the firmament of glory? be assured they shall never be blessed, who bless themselves in their sins; if, saith God, Deut. xxix. 19. the sinner 'bless himself, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst; the Lord will not spare him, but then the anger of the Lord, and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and the Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven.' A man can no more extract blessedness out of sin, than he can suck health out of poison. O let us lead blessed lives, 'and so declare plainly that we seek a country,' Heb. xi. 14.

Use 4. To you that have any good hope, through grace, that you have a title to blessedness, let me say as the Levites did to the people, Nehem. ix. 5.

'Stand up and bless the Lord your God for ever and ever.' What infinite cause have you to be thankful that the lot of free-grace is fallen upon you! Though you had forfeited all, yet God hath provided an heaven of happiness, and he is carrying you thither upon the sea of Christ's blood, the gale of his Spirit blowing your sails; you are in a better condition through Christ, than when you had the robes of innocency upon you; God hath raised you a step higher by your fall. How many hath God passed by, and looked upon you? millions there are who shall lie for ever under the bitter vials of God's curses, whereas he will bring you into his banqueting house, and pour out the flagons of wine, and feast you eternally with the delicacies of heaven. O adore free-grace, triumph in this love of God; spend and be spent for the Lord; dedicate yourselves to him in a way of resignation, and lay out yourselves for him in a way of gratulation; never think you can do enough for that God who will shortly set you ashore on the land of promise.

### CHAP. III.

*Shewing that the godly are in some sense already blessed.*

**I** Proceed now to the second aphorism or conclusion, that the godly are in some sense already blessed. 'Blessed are.' The saints are not only blessed when they are comprehensors, but while they are viators. They are blessed before they are crowned. This seems a paradox to flesh and blood; what reproached and maligned, yet Blessed! A man that looks upon the children of God with a carnal eye, and sees how they are afflicted, and like the ship in the gospel which was covered with waves, Matt. viii. 24. would think they were far from blessed.

mess. Saint Paul brings a catalogue of his sufferings 2 Cor. xi. 24, 25, 26. 'Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck,' &c. And those Christians of the first magnitude, of whom the world was not worthy, 'had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings; they were sawn asunder, they were slain with the sword,' Heb. xi. 36, 37. What! and were all these during the time of their sufferings blessed? A carnal man would think, if this be to be blessed, God deliver him from it.

But, however sense and reason would give their vote, our Saviour Christ pronounceth the godly man blessed, though a mourner, though a martyr, yet blessed. Job on the dunghill was blessed Job. The saints are blessed when they are cursed. Shimei did curse David, 2 Sam. xvi. 5. 'He came forth and cursed him;' yet when he was cursed David, he was blessed David. The saints though they are bruised, yet they are blessed. Not only they shall be blessed, but they are so, Psal. cxix. 1. 'Blessed are the undefiled.' Psal. iii. 8. 'Thy blessing is upon thy people.'

*Quest.* How are the saints already blessed?

*Ans.* 1. In that they are enriched with heavenly blessings, Eph. i. 3. They are 'partakers of the divine nature,' 2 Pet. i. 4. not by an incorporation into the divine essence, but by a transformation into the divine likeness. This is blessedness begun; as the new-born babe is said to have life in it as well as he who is fully grown: So the saints who are partakers of the divine nature, have an inchoative blessedness, though they have not arrived yet at perfection. Believers have 'the seed of God in them,' 1 John iii. 9. And this is a seed of blessedness. The flower of glory grows out of the seed of grace; grace and glory differ, not in kind, but degree, the one is the root, the other the fruit; grace



is glory in the dawning ; and glory grace in the meridian ; and in this sense that assertion of Austin is true, grace is the first link of the chain of blessedness ; now he that hath the first link of the chain in his hand hath the whole chain. The saints have the Spirit of God in them, 2 Tim. i. 14. ' The Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.' How can the blessed Spirit be in a man and he not blessed ? a godly man's heart is a paradise planted with the choicest fruit, and God himself walks in the midst of this paradise and must he not needs be blessed ?

2. The saints are already blessed, because their sins are not imputed to them. Psal. xxxii. 2. ' Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity.' God's not imputing iniquity, signifies God's making of sin not to be ; it is as if the man had never sinned ; the debt book is cancelled in Christ's blood, and if the debtor owe ever so much, yet if the creditor cross the book, it is as if he had never owed any thing. God's not imputing sin, is, that God will never call for the debt ; or if it should be called for, it shall be hid out of sight, Jer. l. 20. ' In those days the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none ; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found.' Now such a man who hath not sin imputed to him, is blessed ; and the reason is, because if sin be not imputed to a man, then the curse is taken away ; and if the curse be taken away then he must needs be blessed.

3. The saints are already blessed, because they are in covenant with God. This is clear, by comparing two scriptures, Jer. xxxi. 33. ' I will be their God,' and Psal. cxliv. ' Happy is that people whose God is the Lord : ' This is the crowning blessing, to have the Lord for our God ; impossible it is to imagine that God should be our God, and we not blessed. This sweet word, ' I will be your God,' implies,

1. Propriety, that all that is in God shall be ours; his love ours, his Spirit ours, his mercy ours.

2. It implies all relations. 1. Of a father, 2 Cor. vi. 18. 'I will be a Father unto you,' The sons of a prince are happy; how blessed are the saints who are of the true blood royal? 2. It implies the relation of a husband, Isa. liv. 5. 'Thy maker is thy husband.' The spouse being contracted to her husband, is happy, by having an interest in all he hath. The saints being contracted by faith are blessed, tho' the solemnity of the marriage be kept for heaven. 3. It implies terms of friendship. They who are in covenant with God, are favourites of heaven, 'Abraham my friend,' Isa. xli. 8. It is counted a subject's happiness to be in favour with his prince, though he may live a while from court; how happy must he needs be who is God's favourite?

4. The saints are already blessed, because they have a reversion of heaven; as on the contrary, he who hath hell in reversion, is said to be already condemned. John iii. 18. 'He that believeth not is condemned already.' He is as sure to be condemned, as if he were condemned already. So he who hath heaven in reversion, may be said to be already blessed; a man that hath the reversion of an house, after a short lease is run out, he looks upon it as his already; this house, saith he, is mine: So a believer hath a reversion of heaven after the lease of life is run out, and he can say at present, Christ is mine, and glory is mine; he hath a title to heaven, and he is a blessed man that hath a title to shew; nay, faith turns the reversion into a possession.

5. The saints are already blessed, because they have the first fruits of blessedness here; we read of the 'earnest of the Spirit, and the seal,' 2 Cor. i. 22. and the first fruits, Rom. viii. 23. Heaven is already begun in a believer, Rom. xiv. 17. 'The king

dom of God is peace and joy in the holy Ghost.' This kingdom is in a believer's heart, Luke xvii. 21. The people of God have a prelibation, and taste of blessedness here. As Israel tasted a bunch of grapes before they were actually possessed of Canaan : so the children of God have those secret incomes of the Spirit, those smiles of Christ's face, those kisses of his lips, those love-tokens that are as bunches of grapes, and they think themselves sometimes in heaven. ' Paul was let down in a basket,' Acts ix. 25. Oftentimes the Comforter is let down to the soul in an ordinance, and now the soul is in the suburbs of Hierusalem above ; a Christian sees heaven by faith, and tastes it by joy, and what is this but blessedness ?

9. The saints may be said in this life to be blessed, because all things tend to make them blessed. Rom. viii. 28. ' All things work for good to them that love God : ' We say to him that hath every thing falling out for the best, You are an happy man ; the saints are very happy, for all things have a tendency to their good : prosperity doth them good, adversity doth them good, nay, sin turns to their good ; every trip makes them more watchful ; their maladies are their medicines ; are not they happy persons that have every wind blowing them to the right port ?

7. A saint may be said to be blessed, because part of him is already blessed ; he is blessed in his head ; Christ's head is in glory ; Christ and believers make one body mystical, their head is gotten into heaven.

*Use 1. Inform. Branch 1.* See the difference between a wicked man and a godly ; let a wicked man have ever so many comforts, still he is cursed ; let a godly man have ever so many crosses, still he is blessed ; let a wicked man have the candle of God shining on him, Job xxix. 3. let his way be so smooth that he meets with no rubs ; let him have

success, yet still there is a curse entailed upon him; you may read the sinner's inventory, Deut. xxviii. 16, 17, 18. He is not more full of sin than he is of a curse; though perhaps he blesseth himself in his wickedness, yet he is heir to God's curse; all the curses of the Bible are his portion, and at the day of death his portion is sure to be paid; but a godly man in the midst of all his miseries is blessed; he may be under the cross, but not under a curse.

*Branch 2.* It shews the privilege of a believer; he not only shall be blessed, but he is blessed; blessedness is begun in him: Psal. cxv. 15. You are blessed of the Lord: Let the condition of the righteous be ever so bad, yet it is blessed; he is blessed in affliction: Psal. xciv. 'Blessed is he whom thou chastenest:' Blessed in poverty. Jam. ii. 5. 'Poor in the world, rich in faith:' Blessed in disgrace: 1 Pet. iv. 14. 'The Spirit of God and of glory resteth upon you.' This may be a cordial to the fainting Christian! he is blessed in life and death, Satan cannot supplant him of the blessing.

*Branch 3.* How may this take away murmuring and melancholy from a child of God? Wilt thou repine and be sad when thou art blessed? Esau wept because he wanted the blessing: Gen. xxvii. 38. 'Bless me, even me also, O my father, and Esau lift up his voice and wept.' But shall a child of God be immoderately cast down, when he hath the blessing? Adam sinned in the midst of paradise; how evil is it to be blessed, and yet murmur.

*Branch 4.* What an encouragement is this to godliness? we are all ambitious of a blessing, then let us espouse religion, Psal. cxii. 1. 'Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord.' But you will say, this way is every where spoken against: it is no matter, seeing this is the way to get a blessing: suppose a rich man should adopt another for his heir, and others should reproach him, he cares not, as long

as he is heir to the estate : so, what though others may reproach thee for thy religion, as long as it entails a blessing upon thee ? The same day thou becomest godly, thou becomest blessed.

## CHAP. IV.

MATT. v. 3. *Blessed are the poor in Spirit.*

**H**AVING spoken of the general notion of blessedness, I come next to consider the subjects of this blessedness, and these our Saviour hath decyphered to be the Poor in Spirit, the mourners, &c.: but before I touch upon these, I shall a little preface or paraphrase upon this sermon of the Beatitudes.

1. Observe the divinity in this sermon, which goes beyond all philosophy : the philosophers use to say, one contrary expels another ; but here one contrary begets another ; poverty useth to expel riches ; but here poverty begets riches ; for how rich are they that have a kingdom ? mourning useth to expel joy ; but behold here mourning begets joy. ' They shall be comforted.' Water useth to quench the flame, but the water of tears kindles the flame of joy. Persecution useth to expel happiness, but here it makes happy. ' Blessed are they that are persecuted.' These are the sacred paradoxes in our Saviour's sermon.

2. Observe how Christ's doctrine and the opinion of carnal men differ. They think, ' Blessed are the rich ;' the world would count him blessed ' who could have Midas' wish, that all he touched might be turned into gold. But Christ saith, ' Blessed are the poor in spirit.' The world thinks, blessed are they on the pinnacle : but Christ pronounceth them blessed who are in the valley ; Christ's reckonings and the world's do not agree.

3. Observe the nature of true religion ; poverty

leads the van, a persecution brings up the rear. Every true saint, saith Luther, is heir to the cross. Some there are who would be thought religious, displaying Christ's colours by a glorious profession; but to be poor in spirit, and persecuted, they cannot take down this bitter pill; they would wear Christ's jewels, but wave his cross; these are strangers to religion.

4. Observe the certain connexion between grace and its reward; they who are poor in Spirit, shall have the kingdom of God; they are as sure to go to heaven, as if they were in heaven already. Our Saviour would encourage men to religion, by sweetening commands with promises; he ties duty and reward together. As in the body, the veins carry the blood, and the arteries the spirits; so one part of these verses carries duty, and the other part carries reward. As that scholar of Apelles painted Helena richly drawn in costly and glorious apparel, hung all over with orient pearl, and precious stones. So our Lord Christ having set down several qualifications of a Christian, 'Poor in spirit, pure in heart,' &c. draws these heavenly virtues in their fair colours of blessedness, and sets the magnificent crown of reward upon them, that by this orienacy, he might the more set forth their unparalleled beauty, and entice holy love.

5. Observe here the concatenation of the graces; 'Poor in spirit, meek, merciful,' &c. where there is one grace, there is all. As they say of the cardinal virtues, the virtues are chained together; so we may say of the graces of the Spirit, they are linked and chained together; he that hath poverty of spirit is a mourner; he that is a mourner is meek; he that is meek is merciful, &c. The Spirit of God plants in the heart an habit of all the graces; the new creature hath all the parts and lineaments; as

in the body there is a composition of all the elements, and a mixture of all the humours. The graces of the Spirit are like a row of pearls, which hang together upon the string of religion, and serve to adorn Christ's bride: This I note, to shew you a difference between an hypocrite and a true child of God: the hypocrite flatters himself with a pretence of grace: but in the mean time he hath not an habit of all the graces; he hath not poverty of spirit, nor purity of heart; whereas a child of God hath all the graces in his heart, at least radically, though not gradually. These things being premised, I come in particular to those heavenly dispositions of soul to which Christ hath affixed blessedness: and the first is, *Poverty of spirit*.

'Blessed are the poor in spirit.'

Chrysostom and Theophylact are of opinion that this was the first Sermon that ever Christ made, therefore it may challenge our best attention.

'Blessed are the poor in spirit.' Our Lord Christ being to raise an high and stately fabric of blessedness, lays the foundation of it low, in poverty of spirit; but all poverty is not blessed. I shall use a fourfold distinction.

1. I distinguish between poor in estate, and poor in spirit, there are the devil's poor, poor and wicked; whose clothes are not more torn than their conscience. There are some whose poverty is their sin; who through improvidence or excess, have brought themselves to want; these may be poor in estate, but not poor in spirit.

2. I distinguish between spiritually poor, and poor in spirit; he who is without grace, is spiritually poor: but he is not poor in spirit; he knows not his own beggary, Rev. iii. 17. 'Thou knowest not that thou art poor:' he is in the worst sense poor, who hath no sense of his poverty.

3. I distinguish between poor-spirited, and poor

in spirit. They are said to be poor-spirited, who have mean, base spirits, who act below themselves. 1. As they are men; such are those misers, which, having great estates, yet can hardly afford themselves bread; who live sneakingly, and are ready to wish their own throats cut, because they are forced to spend something in satisfying nature's demands: This Solomon calls an evil under the sun, Eccl. vi. 2. 'There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, a man to whom God hath given riches, so that he wants nothing for his soul of all that he desireth, yet God giveth him not power to eat thereof.' Religion makes no man a niggard; though it teacheth prudence, yet not sordidness. 2. Who act below themselves as they are Christians, while they sinfully comply and prostitute themselves to the humours of others; a base kind of metal that will take any stamp; they will for a piece of silver part with the jewel of a good conscience, they will be of the state-religion; they will dance to the devil's pipe, if their superior commands them: These are poor-spirited, but not poor in spirit.

4. I distinguish between poor in an evangelical sense, and in a popish sense; the papists give a wrong gloss upon the text; by poor in spirit they understand those who, renouncing their estates, vow a voluntary poverty, living retiredly in their monasteries: but Christ never meant these; he doth not pronounce them blessed who make themselves poor, leaving their estates, and their callings, but such as are evangelically poor.

Well then, what are we to understand by poor in spirit? The Greek for poor is not to be taken in a strict sense for those who live upon alms? but in a more large sense, for those who are destitute as well of inward as outward comfort: Poor in spirit then signifies those who are brought to the sense of their sins, and seeing no goodness in themselves, despair



in themselves, and sue wholly to the mercy of God in Christ. Poverty of Spirit is a kind of self-annihilation ; such an expression I find in Calvin : The poor in Spirit, saith he, are they who seeing nothing in themselves, fly to mercy for sanctuary ; such an one was the Publican, Luke xviii. 13. ' God be merciful to me a sinner ;' of this temper was saint Paul, Phil. iii. 9. ' That I may be found in Christ, not having mine own righteousness ;' these are the poor which are invited as guests to wisdom's banquet, Prov. vii. 3, 4. Here several questions may be propounded.

*Quest. 1.* Why doth Christ here begin with poverty of spirit ? why is this put in the fore-front ? I answer, Christ doth it, to shew that poverty of spirit is the very basis and foundation of all the other graces that follow : You may as well expect fruit to grow without a root, as the other graces without this ; till a man be poor in spirit, he cannot mourn : Poverty of spirit is like the fire under the still, which makes the water drop from the eyes ; when a man sees his own defects and deformities, and looks upon himself as undone, then he mourns after Christ ; ' The springs run in the vallies,' Psal. civ. 10. When the heart becomes a valley, and lies low by poverty of spirit, now the springs of holy mourning run there. Till a man be poor in spirit, he ' cannot hunger and thirst after righteousness ;' he must first be sensible of want, before he can hunger ; therefore Christ begins with poverty of spirit, because this ushers in all the rest.

*Q.* The second question is, what is the difference between poverty of spirit and humility ? *Ans.* These are so like, that they have been taken one for the other. Chrysostom by poverty of spirit understands humility ; yet I think there is some difference ; they differ as the cause and the effect. Tertullian saith, none are poor in spirit but the humble ; he seems

to make humility the cause of poverty of spirit: I rather think poverty of spirit is the cause of humility; for when a man sees his want of Christ, and how he lives on the alms of free grace, this makes him humble; he that is sensible of his own vacuity and indigence, with the violet, hangs down his head in humility; humility is the sweet spice that grows from poverty of spirit.

*Quest. 3.* What is the difference between poverty of spirit and self denial? I answer in some things they agree, in some things they differ. In some things they agree; for the poor in spirit is an absolute self-denier; he renounceth all opinion of himself; he acknowledgeth his dependance Christ on and free grace; but in some things they differ; the self-denier parts with the world for Christ; the poor in spirit parts with himself for Christ; *i. e.* his own righteousness; the poor in spirit sees himself nothing without Christ, the self-denier will leave himself nothing for Christ. And thus I have shewed what poverty of spirit is. The words thus opened, present us with this truth.

*Doct.* That Christians must be poor in spirit; or thus, poverty of spirit is the jewel which Christians must wear. As the best creature was made out of nothing, namely, light; so, when a man sees himself nothing, out of this nothing God makes a most beautiful creature: it is God's usual method to make a man poor in spirit, and then fill him with the graces of the spirit; as we deal with a watch, we take it first in pieces, and then set all the wheels and pins in order; so the Lord doth first take a man all in pieces, shews him his undone condition, and then sets him in frame.

The reasons are;

1. Till we are poor in spirit, we are not capable of receiving grace; he who is swelled with an opinion of self-excellency and self-sufficiency, is not fit

for Christ; he is full already; if the hand be full of pebbles, it cannot receive gold; the glass is first emptied before you pour in wine; God doth first empty a man of himself, before he pours in the precious wine of his grace; none but the poor in spirit are within Christ's commission, Isa. lxi. 1. 'The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted;' that is, such as are broken in the sense of their unworthiness.

*Reason 2.* Till we are poor in spirit, Christ is never precious; before we see our own wants, we never see Christ's worth; poverty of spirit is the sauce which makes Christ relish sweet to the soul; mercy is most welcome to the poor in spirit; he who sees himself clad in filthy rags, Zech. iii. 4, 5. what will he give for change of raiment, the righteousness of Christ? what will he give to have the fair mitre of salvation set upon his head? when a man sees himself almost wounded to death, how precious will the balm of Christ's blood be to him? when he sees himself deep in arrears with God, and is so far from paying the debt, that he cannot sum up the debt, how glad would he be of a surety? The pearl of price is only precious to the poor in spirit; he that wants bread, and is ready to starve, will have it whatever it cost; he will lay his garment to pledge; bread he must have or he is undone: so to him that is poor in spirit, that sees his want of Christ, how precious is a Saviour! Christ is Christ, and grace is grace to him; he will do any thing for the bread of life; therefore will God have the soul thus qualified, to raise the price of his market, to enhance the value and estimate of the Lord Jesus.

*Reas. 3.* Till we are poor in spirit, we cannot go to heaven: 'Theirs is the kingdom of heaven;' this doth tune and prepare us for heaven: by nature a man is big with self-confidence, and the gate of heaven is so strait that he cannot enter: now po-

verty of spirit doth lessen the soul, it pares off its superfluity, and now he is fit to enter in at the strait gate. The great cable cannot go through the eye of the needle; but let it be untwisted, and made into small threads, and then it may: poverty of spirit untwists the great cable, it makes a man little in his own eyes, and now an entrance shall be made unto him, 'Richly into the everlasting kingdom.' 2 Pet. i. 11. Through this temple of poverty we must go into the temple of glory.

SECT. 1.

*Use 1.* It shews wherein a Christian's riches doth consist; namely in poverty of spirit. Some think if they can fill their bags with gold, then they are rich; but they who are poor in spirit are the rich men, they are rich in poverty: this poverty entitles them to a kingdom. How poor are they that think themselves rich! how rich are they that see themselves poor? I call it the jewel of poverty. There are some paradoxes in religion that the world cannot understand; for a man to become a fool that he may be wise, 1 Cor. iii. 18. to save his life by losing it, Mat. xvi. 25. and being poor, to be rich; reason laughs at it; but, 'blessed are the poor, for theirs is the kingdom;' then this poverty is to be striven for more than all riches; under these rags is hid cloth of gold; out of this carcase comes honey.

SECT. 2.

*Use 2.* If blessed are the poor in spirit, then by the rule of contraries, cursed are the proud in spirit, Prov. xvi. 5. There is a generation of men who do commit idolatry with themselves; no such idol as self. They admire their own parts, mora-

lities, self-righteousness ; and upon this stock graft the hope of their salvation. There are many are too good to go to heaven ; they have commodities enough of their own growth, and they scorn to live upon the borrow, or be beholden to Christ. These bladders the devil hath blown up with pride, and they are swelled in their own conceit ; but it is like the swelling of a dropsy-man whose bigness is his disease ; thus it was with that proud justiciary, Luke xviii. 11. ‘ The pharisee stood and prayed, God I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican ; I fast twice in the week, I give tythes,’ &c. Here was a man setting up the top sail of pride ; but the publican who was poor in spirit, he stood afar off, and would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast saying, ‘ God be merciful to me a sinner !’ this man carried away the garland ; ‘ I tell you, saith Christ, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other.’ Saint Paul, before his conversion, thought himself in a very good condition, ‘ Touching the law blameless,’ Phil. iii. 6. He thought to have built a tower of his own righteousness, the top whereof should have reached to heaven ; but at last God shewed him there was a crack in the foundation, and then he gets into the rock of ages ; Phil. iii. 9. ‘ That I may be found in him ;’ there is not a more dangerous precipice than self-righteousness ; this was Laodicea’s temper. Rev. iii. 17. ‘ Because thou sayest I am rich, and have need of nothing, and knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable,’ &c. She thought she wanted nothing, when indeed she had nothing. How many doth this damn ! we see some ships that have escaped the rocks, yet are cast away upon the sands : so some who have escaped the rocks of gross sins, yet are cast away upon the sands of self-righteousness ; and how hard is it to

convince such men of their danger! they will not believe but they may be helped out of the dungeon with these rotten rags, they cannot be persuaded their case is so bad as others would make it. Christ tells them they are blind, but they are like Seneca's maid, who was born blind, but she would not believe it, The house said she is dark, but I am not blind. Christ tells them they are naked, and offers his white robes to cover them, but they are of a different persuasion, and because they are blind, they cannot see themselves naked; how many have perished by being their own saviours! O that this might drive the proud sinner out of himself: a man never comes to himself till he comes out of himself; and no man can come out, till first Christ comes in.

### SECT. 3.

If poverty of spirit be so necessary, how shall I know that I am poor in spirit? *Ans.* By the blessed effects of this poverty; which are,

1. He that is poor in spirit is weaned from himself. Psal. cxxxi. 2. 'My soul is even as a weaned child;' it is hard for a man to be weaned from himself. The vine catcheth hold of every thing that is near, to stay itself upon. There is some bough or other a man would be catching hold to rest upon; how hard is it to be brought quite off himself! The poor in spirit are divorced from themselves; they see they must go to hell without Christ; 'My soul is even as a weaned child.'

2. He that is poor in spirit is a Christ-admirer; he hath high thoughts of Christ; he sees himself naked and flies to Christ, that in his garments he may obtain the blessing. He sees himself wounded; and as the wounded deer runs to the water, so he thirsts for Christ's blood, the water of life. Lord, saith he, give me Christ or I die; conscience is

turned into a fiery serpent, and hath stung him ; now, all the world for a brazen serpent ; he sees himself in a state of death ; and how precious is one leaf of the tree of life, which is both for food and medicine : The poor in spirit sees all his riches lie in Christ, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, &c. In every exigence he flies to this magazine and storehouse ; he adores the all-fulness in Christ. They say of the oil in Rheims, though they are continually almost spending it, yet it never wastes. And such is Christ's blood ; it can never be emptied ; he that is poor in spirit hath recourse still to this fountain ; he sets an high value and appreciation upon Christ ; he hides himself in Christ's wounds ; he bathes himself in his blood, he wraps himself in his robe ; he sees a spiritual dearth and famine at home, but he makes out to Christ ; ' Shew me the Lord, saith he, and it sufficeth.'

3. He that is poor in spirit, is ever complaining of his spiritual estate ; that looks as it is with a poor man, he is ever telling you his wants, he hath nothing to help himself with, he is ready to be starved ; so it is with him that is poor in spirit ; he is ever complaining of his wants : I want a broken heart, a thankful heart ; he makes himself the most indigent creature ; though he dares not deny the work of grace (which were a bearing false witness against the Spirit) yet he mourns he hath not more grace. This is the difference between an hypocrite and a child of God ; the hypocrite is ever telling what he hath ; a child of God complains of what he wants ; the one is glad he is so good, the other grieves he is so bad ; the poor in spirit goes from ordinance to ordinance for a supply of his wants, he would fain have his stock increased. Try by this if you are poor in spirit ; while others complain they want children, they want estates, do you complain you want grace ? this is a good sign ; ' there is that

maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches,' Prov. xiii. 17. Some beggars have died rich; the poor in spirit, who have lain all their lives at the gate of mercy, and have lived upon the alms of free grace, have died rich in faith, heirs to a kingdom.

4. He that is poor in spirit, is lowly in heart; rich men are commonly proud and scornful, but the poor are submissive; the poor in spirit roll themselves in the dust, in the sense of their unworthiness; 'I abhor myself in dust,' Job xlii. 6. He who is poor in spirit looks at another's excellencies, and his own infirmities; he denies not only his sins, but his duties; the more he hath, the more humble he is, because he now sees himself a greater debtor to God; if he can do any duty, he acknowledgeth it is Christ's strength more than his own, Phil. iv. 13. As the ship gets to the haven more by the benefit of the wind, than the sail: so when a christian makes any swift progress, it is more by the wind of God's Spirit, than the sail of his own endeavour; the poor in spirit, when he acts most like a saint, he confesseth himself the chief of sinners; he blusheth more at the defect of his graces, than others do at the excess of their sins; he dares not say he hath prayed or wept; he lives, yet not he, but Christ lives in him, Gal. ii. 20. He labours, yet not he, but the grace of God, 1 Cor. xv. 10.

5. He who is poor in spirit, is much in prayer; he sees how short he is of the standard of holiness, therefore begs for more grace; Lord, more faith, more conformity to Christ: A poor man is ever begging; you may by this know one that is poor in spirit, he is ever begging for a spiritual alms; he knocks at heaven's gate; he sends up sighs; he pours out tears; he will not away from the gate till he have his dole; God loves a modest boldness in prayer, such shall not be nonsuited.

6. The poor in spirit is content to take Christ



upon his own terms ; the proud sinner will article and indent with Christ ; he will have Christ and his pleasure ; Christ and his covetousness ; but he that is poor in spirit, sees himself lost without Christ, and he is willing to have him upon his own terms, a prince as well as a Saviour, Phil. iii. 8. ' Jesus my Lord.' A castle that hath been long besieged, and is ready to be taken, will deliver up on any terms to save their lives ; he whose heart hath been a garrison for the devil, and hath held out long in opposition against Christ, when once God hath brought him to poverty of spirit, and he sees himself damned without Christ, let God propound what articles he will, he will readily subscribe to them, Acts ix. 6. ' Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?' He that is poor in spirit, will do any thing that he may have Christ ; he will behead his beloved sin ; he will with Peter, cast himself upon the water to come to Christ.

7. He that is poor in spirit, is an exalter of free grace, none so magnify mercy, as the poor in spirit ; the poor are very thankful : When Paul had tasted mercy, how thankfully doth he adore free grace ! 1 Tim. i. 14. ' The grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant ;' it was super-exuberant ; he sets the crown of his salvation upon the head of free grace ; as a man that is condemned, and hath a pardon sent him, how doth he proclaim the goodness and clemency of his prince ! so saint Paul displays free grace in its orient colours ; he interlines all his epistles with free grace ; as a vessel that hath been perfumed makes the wine taste of it : So Paul, who was a vessel perfumed with mercy, makes all his epistles to taste of this perfume of free grace ; they who are poor in spirit, bless God for the least crumb that falls from the table of free grace.

SECT. 4.

*Use 4.* Labour for poverty of spirit : Christ begins with this, and we must begin here if ever we be saved ; poverty of spirit is the foundation stone on which God lays the superstructure of glory. There are four things may persuade christians to be poor in spirit. 1. This poverty is your riches ; you may have the world's riches, and yet be poor ; you cannot have this poverty, but you must be rich ; poverty of spirit, entitles you to all Christ's riches. 2. This poverty is your nobility ; God looks upon you as persons of honour : he that is vile in his own eyes, is precious in God's eyes : the way to rise is to fall : God esteems the valley highest. 3. Poverty of spirit doth sweetly quiet the soul : when a man is brought off himself to rest on Christ, what a blessed calm is in the heart ! I am poor, but ' my God shall supply all my need,' Phil. iv. 19. I am unworthy, but Christ is worthy. I am indigent, Christ is infinite. ' Lead me to the rock that is higher than I,' Psal. lxi. 2. A man is safe upon a rock : when the soul goes out of itself, and centres upon the rock Christ, now it is firmly settled upon its basis : this is the way to comfort ; thou wilt be ' wounded in spirit,' till thou comest to be ' poor in spirit.' 4. Poverty of spirit paves a causeway for blessedness. ' Blessed are the poor in spirit.' Are you poor in spirit ? you are blessed persons, happy for you that ever you were born ! If you ask, Wherein doth this blessedness appear ? Read the next words, ' Theirs is the kingdom of heaven.'

## CHAP. V.

*Shewing that the Poor in Spirit are enriched with a Kingdom.*

MATT. v. 3. *Theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

**H**ERE is preferment for the saints, they shall be advanced to a kingdom: there are some who, aspiring after earthly greatness, talk of a temporal reign here; but then God's church on earth should not be militant, but triumphant: but sure it is, the saints shall reign in a glorious manner. 'Theirs is the kingdom of heaven;' a kingdom is held the top of all worldly felicity, and 'this honour have all the saints:' So saith our Saviour, 'Theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' All Christ's subjects are kings: by the kingdom of heaven is meant, that state of glory which the saints shall enjoy when they shall reign with God, and the angels for ever; sin, hell, and death being fully subdued. For the illustration of this I shall shew first, wherein the saints in heaven are like kings.

## SECT. 1.

*Wherein the Saints glorified may be compared to Kings.*

Kings have their *insignia* or *regalia*, their ensigns of royalty and majesty.

1. Kings have their crowns: so the saints after death have their crown-royal, Rev. ii. 10. 'Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.' Believers are not only pardoned, but crowned; the crown is an ensign of honour. A crown is not for every one, it will not fit every head; it is only for kings and persons of renown to wear, Psal.

xxi. 3. The crown which the poor in spirit shall wear in heaven, is an honourable crown; God himself installs them into their honour, and sets the crown-royal upon their heads. And this crown the saints shall wear, which is divinely orient and illustrious, and exceeds all others.

1. It is more pure. Other crowns, though they may be made of pure gold, yet they are mixed metal, they have their troubles. A crown of gold cannot be made without thorns; it hath so many vexations belonging to it, that it is apt to make the head ache: which made Cyrus say, did men but know what cares he sustained under the imperial crown, he thought they would not stoop to take it up. But the saint's crown is made without crosses; it is not mingled with care of keeping, or fear of losing. What Solomon speaks in another sense, I may say of the crown of glory, 'it adds no sorrow with it,' Prov. x. 22. This crown, like David's sharp, drives away the evil spirit of sorrow and disquiet; there can be no more grief in heaven, than there is joy in hell.

2. This crown of glory doth not draw envy to it. David's own son envied him, and sought to take his crown from his head. A princely crown is oftentimes the mark for envy and ambition to shoot at; but the crown the saints shall wear is free from envy: one saint shall not envy another, because all are crowned; and though one crown may be larger than another, yet every one shall have as large a crown as he is able to carry.

3. This is a never-fading crown. Other crowns quickly wear away, and tumble into the dust, Prov. xxvii. 4. 'Doth the crown endure to all generations?' Henry the sixth was honoured with the crowns of two kingdoms, France and England; the first was lost through the faction of his nobles; the other was twice plucked from his head. The

crown hath many heirs and successors. The crown is a withering thing ; death is a worm that feeds in it ; but the crown of glory is immarcessible, it fadeth not away, 1 Pet. v. 4. It is not like the rose that loseth its gloss and verdancy ; this crown cannot be made to wither, but like the flower we call *semper vivens*, it keeps always fresh and splendid. Eternity is a jewel of the saint's crown.

2. Kings have their robes. The robe is a garment wherewith kings are arrayed. ' The king of Israel and the king of Judah sat clothed in their robes,' 2 Chron. xviii. 19. The robe was of scarlet or velvet, lined with ermine, sometimes of a purple colour, whence it was called *purpura* ; sometimes of an azure brightness. Thus the saints shall have their robes, Rev. vii. 9. ' I beheld a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations and kindreds, clothed in white robes.' The saints' robes signify their glory and splendour ; and white robes, that is to denote their sanctity ; they have no sin to taint or defile their robes ; in these robes they shall shine as the angels.

3. Kings have their sceptres, in token of rule and greatness : King Ahasuerus held out to Esther the golden sceptre, Esth. v. 2. and the saints in glory have their sceptre, and ' palms in their hand,' Rev. vii. It was a custom of great conquerors to have palm-branches in their hand in token of victory : so the saints, those kings, have palms, an emblem of victory and triumph ; they are victors over sin and hell, Rev. xii. 11. ' They overcame by the blood of the Lamb.'

4. Kings have their thrones : when Cæsar returned from conquering his enemies, there were granted to him four triumphs in token of honour, and there was set for him a chair of ivory in the senate, and a throne in the theatre : thus the saints in heaven returning from their victories over sin,

shall have a chair of state set them more rich than ivory or pearl, and a throne of glory : Rev. iii. 21. This shall be, 1. An high throne; it is seated above all the kings and princes of the earth; nay, it is far above all heavens, Eph. iv. There is, 1. The airy heaven; which is that space from the earth to the sphere of the moon. 2. The starry heaven; the place where are the stars, *superiores planetae*, as the philosophers call them, planets of the higher elevation, as Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, &c. 3. The empyrean heaven, which is called the third heaven, 2 Cor. xii. 2. In this glorious sublime place shall the throne of the saints be erected. 2. It is a safe throne: other thrones are unsafe, they stand tottering; Psal. lxxiii. 18. 'Thou hast set them in slippery places;' but the saint's throne is sure: Rev. iii. 21. 'He that overcometh shall sit with me upon my throne:' the saints shall sit with Christ; he keeps them safe, that no hand of violence can pull them from their throne. O ye people of God think of this; though now you may be called to the bar, yet shortly you shall sit upon the throne.

SECT. 2.

*Shewing wherein the Kingdom of Heaven exceeds other Kingdoms.*

2. Having shewn wherein the saints in glory are like kings, let us next see wherein the kingdom of heaven exceeds other kingdoms.

It exceeds, 1. In the Founder and Maker; other kingdoms have men for their builders, but this kingdom hath God for its builder; Heb. xi. 10. Heaven is said to be 'made without hands,' 2 Cor. v. 1. to shew the excellency of it; neither man nor angel could ever lay stone in this building; God

doth erect this kingdom ; ' Its builder and maker is God.'

2. This kingdom excels in the riches of it ; gold doth not so much surpass iron, as this kingdom doth all other riches ; ' the gates are of pearl,' Rev. xxi. 21. ' and the foundations of it are garnished with all precious stones,' ver. 19. It is enough for cabinets to have pearl ; but were gates of pearl ever heard of before ? It is said ' kings shall throw down their crowns and scepters before it.' Rev. iv. 10. as counting all their glory and riches but dust in comparison of it ; this kingdom hath Deity itself to enrich it, and these riches are such as cannot be weighed in the balance ; neither the heart of man can conceive, nor the tongue of angel express them.

3. This kingdom exceeds in the perfection of it ; other kingdoms are defective ; they have not all provisions within themselves, nor have they all commodities of their own growth ; but are forced to traffic abroad, to supply their wants at home. King Solomon did send for gold to Ophir. 2 Chron. viii. 18. but there is no defect in the kingdom of heaven, here are all delights and rarities to be had. Rev. xxi. 7. ' He that overcometh shall inherit all things.' Here is beauty, wisdom, glory, and magnificence ; here is the tree of life in the midst of this paradise ; all things are to be found here but sin and sorrow, the absence whereof adds to the fulness of this kingdom.

4. It excels in security ; other kingdoms fear either foreign invasions, or intestine divisions. Solomon's kingdom was peaceable a while, but at last he had an alarm given him by the enemy, 1 Kings xi. 4. But the kingdom of heaven is so impregnable, that it fears no hostile assaults or inroads. The devils are said to be locked up in chains. Jude vi. The saints in heaven shall no more need fear them, than a man fears that thief's robbing who is hanged

up in chains. The gates of this celestial kingdom 'are not shut at all by day,' Rev. xxi. 25. We shut the gates of a city in a time of danger; but the gates of that kingdom always stand open; to shew that there is no fear of the approach of an enemy; the kingdom hath gates for the magnificence of it; but the gates are not shut, because of the secureness of it.

5. This kingdom excels in its stability; other kingdoms have Vanity written upon them, they cease, and are changed; though they may have an head of gold, yet feet of clay, Hos. i. 4. 'I will cause the kingdom to cease.' Kingdoms have their climacteric year: Where is the glory of Athens? the pomp of Troy? What is become of the Assyrian, Grecian, Persian monarchy? those kingdoms are demolished and laid in the dust; but the kingdom of heaven hath Eternity written upon it, it is an everlasting kingdom, 2 Pet. i. 11. other kingdoms may be lasting, but not everlasting; the apostle calls it 'a kingdom that cannot be shaken,' Heb. xli. 28. It is fastened upon a strong basis, the Omnipotency of God; it runs parallel with eternity: Rev. xxi. 3. 'They shall reign for ever and ever.'

SECT. 3.

*Shewing that this Kingdom shall be certainly and infallibly entailed upon the Saints.*

I shall next clear the truth of this proposition, that the saints shall be possessed of this kingdom.

1. In regard of God's free grace. Luke xii. 32. 'It is your Father's good pleasure to give you a kingdom.' It is not any desert in us, but free grace in God: The papists say we merit the kingdom *ex condigno*; but we disclaim the title of merit; heaven is a donative.



2. There is a price paid! Jesus Christ hath shed his blood for it; all the saints come to the kingdom through blood; Christ's hanging upon the cross, was to bring us to the crown; as the kingdom of heaven is a gift in regard of the Father, so it is a purchase in regard of the Son.

#### SECT. 4.

#### *The several Conclaries and Inferences drawn from the Point.*

*Use 1. Inform. Branch 1.* It shews us that religion is no unreasonable thing; God doth not cut us out work, and give no reward; godliness inthrones us in a kingdom. When we hear of the doctrine of repentance, steeping our souls in brinish tears for sin; and the doctrine of mortification, 'pulling out the right eye,' beheading the king-sin; we are ready to think it is hard to take down this bitter pill; but here is that in the text may sweeten it; there is a kingdom behind, and that will make amends for all; this glorious recompense doth as far exceed our thoughts, as it doth surpass our deserts; no man can say without wrong to God that he is a hard master. God gives double pay, he bestows a kingdom upon those that fear him; Satan may disparage the ways of God, like those spies that raised an ill report of the good land, Numb. xiii. 32. But will Satan mend your wages if you serve him? he gives damnable pay; instead of a kingdom, 'chains of darkness,' Jude, vi.

3. See here the mercy and bounty of God, that hath prepared a kingdom for his people; it is a favour that we poor worms, and no men, should be suffered to live; but that worms should be made kings, this is divine bounty; it is mercy to pardon us, but it is rich mercy to crown us: 'Behold,

what manner of love is this !' Earthly princes may bestow great gifts and donatives on their subjects, but they keep the kingdom to themselves ; though Pharaoh advanced Joseph to honour, and gave him a ring from his finger, yet he kept the kingdom to himself ; Gen. xli. 40. ' Only in the throne I will be greater than thou ;' but God gives a kingdom to his people, he sets them upon the throne. How doth David admire the goodness of God in bestowing upon him a temporal kingdom ! 2 Sam. vii. 18. ' Then went king David in, and sat before the Lord, and said, who am I, O Lord God ? and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto ?' He wondered that God should take him from the sheep-fold, and set him on the throne ! that God should turn his shepherd's staff into a sceptre ! O then how may the saints admire the riches of grace, that God should give them a kingdom, above all the princes of the earth ; nay, far above all heavens ! God thinks nothing too good for his children. We many times think much of a tear, a prayer, or to sacrifice a sin for him ; but he doth not think much to bestow a kingdom upon us : how will the saints read over the lectures of free grace in heaven, and trumpet forth the praises of that God who hath crowned them with loving kindness.

3. It shews us that Christianity is no disgraceful thing ! Wise men measure things by the end ; what is the end of godliness ? it brings a kingdom ; a man's sin brings him to shame, Prov. xiii. 5. Rom. vi. 21. ' What fruit had ye in those things whereof ye are now ashamed ?' but religion brings to honour : Prov. iv. 8. it brings a man to a throne, a crown, it ends in glory ; it is the sinners folly to reproach a saint ; it is just as if Shimei had reproached David, when he was going to be made king ; it is a saint's wisdom to contemn a reproach ;

say as David when he danced before the ark. 'I will yet be more vile,' 2 Sam. vi. 22. If to pray and hear, and serve my God be vile,' 'I will yet be more vile:' this is my excellency, my glory; I am doing now that which will bring me to a kingdom: O think it no disgrace to be a Christian. I speak it chiefly to you who are entering upon the ways of God; perhaps you may meet with such as will reproach and censure you; bind their reproaches as a crown about your head, despise their censure as much as their praise; remember, there is a kingdom entailed upon godliness. Sin draws hell after it, grace draws a crown after it.

4. See here that which may make the people of God long for death; then they shall enter upon their kingdom. Indeed the wicked may fear death; it will not lead them to a kingdom, but a prison; hell is the aisle where they must lie rotting for ever with the devil and his angels. To every Christless person death is the king of terrors; but the godly may long for death, it will prefer them to a kingdom. When Scipio's father had told him of that glory the soul should be invasted with in a state of immortality; Why then saith Scipio, do I tarry thus long upon the earth? why do I not hasten to die? Believers are not happy till death. When Cræsus asked Solon who he thought happy? he told him one Tellus a man that was dead; a Christian at death shall be completely installed into his honour: the anointing oil shall be poured on him, and the crown-royal set upon his head. The Thracians in their funerals used music. The heathens, as Theocritus observes, had their funeral banquet, because of that felicity which they supposed the parties deceased were entered into; the saints are now heirs of the kingdom, James ii. 5. Doth not the heir desire to be crowned?

Truly there is enough to wean us, and make

us willing to be gone from hence. The saints eat ashes like bread, they are here in a suffering condition : Psal. cxli. 7. ‘ Our bones are scattered at the grave’s mouth,’ as when one cutteth and cleaveth wood upon the earth. When a man hews, and cuts a tree, the chips fly up and down, here and there a chip : so here a saint wounded, there a saint massacred ; our bones fly like chips up and down ; ‘ for thy sake are we killed all the day long ;’ Rom. viii. 36. But there is a kingdom coming, when the body is buried, the soul crowned. Who would not be willing to sail in a storm if he were sure to be crowned as soon as he came to shore ? how is it that the godly look so ghastly at the thoughts of death, as if they were rather going to their execution, than their coronation ? though we should be willing to stay here a while to do service, yet we should, with saint Paul, ‘ desire to be dissolved and be with Christ.’ The day of a believer’s dissolution is the day of his inauguration.

### SECT. 5.

*Containing a Scrutiny and Trial, whether we belong to this Kingdom.*

**Use 2. Trial.** But how shall we know that this glorious kingdom shall be settled upon us at death ? 1. If God hath set up his kingdom within us ; Luke xvii. 21. ‘ The kingdom of God is within you ;’ by the kingdom of God there is meant the kingdom of grace in the heart. Grace may be compared to a kingdom, it sways the sceptre ; it gives out laws, there is the law of love ; grace beats down the devil’s garrisons, it brings the heart into a sweet subjection to Christ ; now is this kingdom of grace set up in thy heart ? Dost thou rule over thy sins ? canst thou bind those kings in chains ? art thou a

king over thy pride, passion, unbelief? is the kingdom of God within you? While others aspire after earthly greatness, and labour for a kingdom without them, dost thou labour for a kingdom within thee? certainly if the kingdom of grace be in thy heart, thou shalt have the kingdom of glory. If God's kingdom enter into thee, thou shalt enter into his kingdom. But let not that man ever think to reign in glory, who lives a slave to his lusts.

2. If thou art a believer, thou shalt go to this blessed kingdom: James ii. 5. 'Rich in faith, heirs of the kingdom.' Faith is an heroical act of the soul; it makes an holy adventure on God by a promise; this is the crowning grace; faith puts us into Christ, and our title to the crown comes in by Christ. By faith we are born of God, and so we become children of the blood-royal. By faith our hearts are purified, Acts xv. 19. and so we are made fit for a kingdom; 'rich in faith, heirs of the kingdom.' Faith paves a causeway to heaven, believers die heirs to the crown.

3. He that hath a noble, kingly spirit, shall go to the heavenly kingdom; 'set your affection on things above,' Col. iii. 2. Dost thou live in the world, above the world? The eagle doth not catch flies, she soars aloft in the air; dost thou pant after glory and immortality? Hast thou a brave majestic spirit, an heavenly ambition: dost thou mind the favour of God, the peace of Sion, the salvation of thy soul? dost thou abhor that which is sordid and below thee? Alexander would not exercise at the Olympic games. Canst thou trample on all sublunary things? Is heaven in thy eye, and Christ in thy heart, and the world under thy feet? He who hath such a kingly spirit, that looks no lower than a crown, he shall dwell on high, and have his throne mounted far above all heavens.

SECT. 6.

*A Serious Exhortation to Christians.*

*Use 3. Exhortation.* And it hath a double aspect: it looks, 1. towards the wicked. Is there a kingdom to be had, a kingdom so enamelled and bespangled with glory? Oh then, do not by your folly make yourselves incapable of this preferment; do not for the satisfying a base lust forfeit a kingdom; do not drink away a kingdom; do not for the lap of pleasure lose the crown of life: if men, before they did commit a sin, would but sit down and rationally consider whether the present gain and sweetness in sin would countervail the loss of a kingdom, I believe it would put them into a cold sweat, and give some check to their unbridled affections. Jacob took Esau by the heel. Look not upon the smiling face of sin, but take it by the heel, look at the end of it; it will deprive you of a kingdom; and can any thing make amends for that loss? O is it not madness to lose a kingdom for the unfruitful works of darkness? How will the devil, at the last day, reproach and laugh at men that they should be so stupidly sottish, as for a rattle to forego a crown! Like those Indians, who for pictures and glass beads will part with their gold. Surely it will much contribute to the vexation of the damned to think how foolishly they missed of a kingdom.

2. The exhortation looks towards the godly; and it exhorts to two things. 1. Is there a kingdom in reversion? then let this be a motive to duty; do all the service you can for God while you live; 'spend and be spent.' The reward is honourable; the thoughts of a kingdom should add wings to prayer, and fire to zeal; 'what honour and dignity hath been done to Mordecai?' saith king Aha-

suerus, Esther. vi. 3. Inquire what hath been done for God? what love hast thou shewed to his name? what zeal for his glory; where is the head of that Goliath lust thou hast slain for his sake? Methinks we should sometimes go aside into our closets and weep, to consider how little work we have done for God: What a vast disproportion is there between our service and our reward? what is all our weeping and fasting, compared to a kingdom? Oh improve all your interest for God; make seasons of grace opportunities for service.

And that you may act more vigorously for God, know, and be assured, the more work you do, the more glory you shall have: every saint shall have a kingdom; but the more service any man doth for God, the greater will be his kingdom: there are degrees of glory, which I prove thus:

1. Because there are degrees of torment in hell, Luke xx. 47. 'They shall receive greater damnation.' They who do make religion a cloak for their sin, shall have an hotter place in hell: now, if there be degrees of torment in hell, then, by the rule of contraries, there are degrees of glory in the kingdom of heaven.

2. Seeing God in his free grace rewards men according to their works, therefore the more service they do, the greater shall their reward be, Rev. xxii. 12. 'Behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his works shall be.' He that hath done more, shall receive more; he whose pound gained ten, was made ruler over ten cities, Luke xix. 16. This may very much excite to eminency in religion; the more the lamp of your grace shines, the more you shall shine in the heavenly orb: Would you have your crown brighter, your kingdom larger, your palm-branches more flourishing? be Christians of degrees; do much work in a little time: while you are laying out,

God is laying up ; the more glory you bring to God, the more glory you shall have from God.

2. Walk worthy of this kingdom, 1 Thess. ii. 12. 'That ye would walk worthy of God who hath called you to his kingdom.' Live as kings, let the majesty of holiness appear in your faces : those who looked on Stephen, 'saw his face as it had been the face of an angel,' Acts vi. 15. a kind of angelic brightness was seen in his visage : when we shine in zeal, humility, gravity, this doth beautify and honour us in the eyes of others, and make us look as those who are heirs apparent to a crown.

### SECT. 7.

*Use 4. Consolation.* Here is comfort to the people of God in case of poverty : God hath provided them a kingdom. 'Theirs is the kingdom of heaven : ' A child of God is oft so low in the world, that he hath not a foot of land to inherit ; he is poor in purse, and poor in spirit ; but here is a fountain of consolation opened ; the poorest saint who hath lost all his golden fleece, is heir to a kingdom ; a kingdom which excels all the kingdoms and principalities of the world, more than pearl or diamond doth excel brass ; it is peerless and endless. The hope of a kingdom, saith Basil, should carry a Christian with courage and cheerfulness through all his afflictions ; and it is a saying of Luther, The sea of God's mercy overflowing in spiritual blessings, should drown all the sufferings of this life. What though thou goest now in rags ? thou shalt have thy white robes ? what though thou art fed as Daniel with pulse, and hast coarser fare ? thou shalt feast it when thou comest into the kingdom ; here thou drinkest the water of tears, but shortly thou shalt drink the wine of Paradise ; be comforted with the thoughts of a kingdom.



## CHAP. VI.

MATT. v. 4. *Blessed are they that mourn.*

**H**ERE are eight steps leading to true blessedness; they may be compared to Jacob's ladder, the top whereof reached to heaven; we have already gone over one step, and now let us proceed to the second: 'Blessed are they that mourn.' We must go through the valley of tears to paradise. Mourning were a sad and unpleasant subject to treat on, were it not that it hath blessedness going before, and comfort coming after: mourning is put here for repentance; it implies both Sorrow, which is the cloud; and Tears, which are the rain distilling in this golden shower, God comes down to us. The words fall into two parts. 1. An assertion, that mourners are blessed persons. 2. A reason, because they shall be comforted. I begin with the first, the Assertion, mourners are blessed persons. Luke vi. 21. 'Blessed are ye that weep now.' Though the saints' tears are bitter tears, yet they are blessed tears.

*Quest.* But will all mourning entitle a man to blessedness?

*Ans.* No; There is a twofold mourning which is far from making one blessed.

There is 1. A carnal mourning. 1. A diabolical mourning.

1. There is a carnal mourning, when we lament outward losses, Matt. ii. 18. 'In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation and weeping, and great mourning; Rachel weeping for her children,' &c. There are abundance of these tears shed; we have many can weep over a dead child, that cannot mourn over a crucified Saviour: worldly sorrows hasten

our funerals, 2 Cor. vii. 10. 'The sorrow of the world worketh death.'

2. There is a diabolical mourning, and that is twofold :

1. When a man mourns that he cannot satisfy his impure lust ; this is like the devil, whose great torture is, that he can be no more wicked : thus Amnon mourned, and was sick, till he had defiled his sister Tamar,' 2 Sam. xiii. 2. Thus Ahab mourned for Naboth's vineyard, 1 Kings xxi. 4. 'He laid him down upon his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no bread ;' this was a devilish mourning.

2. When men are sorry for the good that they have done : Pharaoh grieved that he had let the children of Israel go, Exod. xiv. 5. Many are so devilish, that they are troubled they have prayed so much, and have heard so many sermons ; they repent of their repentance : but if we repent of the good which is past, God will not repent of the evil which is to come.

## SECT. 1.

### *Shewing the Object of holy Mourning.*

To illustrate this point of holy mourning, I shall shew you what is the adequate object of it. There are two objects of spiritual mourning, sin and misery.

1. Sin, and that twofold ; 1. Our own sin. 2. The sin of others.

1. Our own sin ; sin must have tears : while we carry the fire of sin about us, we must carry the water of tears to quench it : Ezek. vii. 16. They are not blessed, saith Chrysostom, who mourn for the dead, but who mourn for sin ; and indeed good reason we mourn for sin, if we consider, 1. The

guilt of sin, which binds over to wrath : will not a guilty person weep, who is to be bound over to the sessions? every sinner is to be tried for his life, and is sure to be cast if mercy doth not become an advocate for him. 2. The pollution of sin; sin is a plague spot, and wilt thou not labour to wash away this spot with thy tears? sin makes a man worse than a toad or a serpent; the serpent hath nothing but what God hath put into it, poison is medicinal; but the sinner hath that which the devil hath put into him. Acts v. 3. 'Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost?' What a strange metamorphosis hath sin made! the soul which was once of an azure brightness, sin hath made of a sable colour; we have in our hearts the seed of the unpardonable sin; we have the seeds of all those sins for which the damned are now tormented; and shall we not mourn? he that mourns not, sure hath lost the use of his reason; but every mourning for sin, is not sufficient to entitle a man to blessedness. I shall shew :

1. What is not the right gospel-mourning for sin.
2. What is the right gospel-mourning for sin.

#### SECT. 2.

1. What is not the right gospel-mourning for sin; there is a five-fold mourning which is false and spurious.

1. A despairing kind of mourning; such was Judas' mourning; he saw his sin, he was sorry, he made confession, he justifies Christ, he makes restitution: Matt. xxvii. Judas who is in hell, did more than many now a days; he confessed his sin; he did not plead necessity, or good intentions; but makes an open acknowledgment of his sin, I have sinned; Judas made restitution; his conscience told him he came wickedly by the money; it was the price of blood, and he 'brought again the thirty pieces of

silver to the high priests.' Matt. xxvii. 3. But how many are there who invade the rights and possessions of others, but not a word of restitution ! Judas was honester than they are ; well, wherein was Judas' sorrow blame-worthy ? It was a mourning joined with despair ; he thought his wound broader than the plaster ; he drowned himself in tears ; his was not a repentance unto life, Acts xi. 8. but rather unto death.

2. An hypocritical mourning ; the heart is very deceitful, it can betray as well by a tear, as by a kiss : Saul looks like a mourner, and as he was sometimes among the prophets, 1 Sam. x. 12. so he seemed to be among the penitents, 1 Sam. xv. 25. ' And Saul said unto Samuel, I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord.' Saul did play the hypocrite in his mourning ; for, 1. He did not take shame to himself, but he did rather take honour to himself, verse 30. ' Honour me before the elders of the people.' 2. He did pare and mince his sin that it might appear lesser ; he laid his sin upon the people ; verse 24. ' Because I feared the people ;' they would have me fly upon the spoil, and I durst do no other ; a true mourner labours to draw out sin in its bloody colours, and accent it with all its killing aggravations, that he may be deeply humbled before the Lord, Ezra ix. 6. ' Our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespasses are grown up unto heaven.' The true penitent labours to make the worst of his sin ; Saul labours to make the best of sin ; like a patient that makes the best of his disease, lest the physician should prescribe him too sharp physic. How easy is it for a man to put a cheat upon his soul, and by hypocrisy to weep himself into hell.

3. A forced mourning ; when tears are pumped out by God's judgments ; these are like the tears

of a man that hath the stone, or that lies upon the rack. Such was Cain's mourning, Gen. iv. 13. 'My punishment is greater than I can bear;' his punishment troubled him more than his sin; to mourn only for fear of hell, is like a thief that weeps for the penalty, rather than the offence; the tears of the wicked are forced by the fire of affliction.

4. An extrinsical mourning; when sorrow lies only in the outside, 'they disfigure their faces,' Matt. vi. 16. The eye is tender, but the heart hard. Such was Ahab's mourning, 1 Kings xxi. 27. 'He rent his clothes, and put sackcloth on his flesh, and went softly. His clothes were rent, but his heart was not rent; he had sackcloth, but no sorrow: he did hang down his head like a bulrush, but his heart was like an adamant. There are many may be compared to weeping marbles, they are both watery and flinty.

5. A vain fruitless mourning; some will shed a few tears, but are as bad as ever; they will cozen, and be unclean; such a kind of mourning there is in hell; the damned weep, but they blaspheme.

### SECT. 3.

3. What is the right gospel-mourning?

*Ans.* That mourning which will entitle a man to blessedness, hath these qualifications.

1. It is spontaneous and free; it must come as water out of a spring, not as fire out of a flint. Tears for sin must be like myrrh which drops from the tree freely without cutting or forcing. Mary Magdalen's repentance was voluntary, 'she stood weeping,' Luke vii. She came to Christ with ointment in her hand, with love in her heart, with tears in her eyes; God is for a free-will offering, he loves not to be put to distrain,

2. Gospel mourning is spiritual; that is, when we mourn for sin more than suffering. Pharaoh said, 'take away the plague,' he never thought of the plague of his heart. A sinner mourns because judgment follows at the heel of sin; but David cries out, 'My sin is ever before me,' Psal. li. God had threatened that the sword should ride in circuit in his family; but David doth not say, the sword is ever before me, but my sin is ever before me; the offence against God troubled him; he grieved more for the treason than the bloody axe; thus the penitent prodigal, Luke xv. 21. 'I have sinned against heaven, and before thee:' he doth not say, I am almost starved among the husks, but I have offended my father. In particular, our mourning for sin, if it be spiritual, must be under this threefold notion.

1. We must mourn for sin as it is an act of hostility and enmity. Sin doth not only make us unlike God, but contrary to God, Lev. xxvi. 40. 'and that they have walked contrary unto me.' Sin doth affront and resist the Holy Ghost, Acts vii. 51. Sin is contrary to God's nature: God is holy; sin is an impure thing; sin is contrary to his will; if God be of one mind, sin is of another; sin doth all it can to spite God. The Hebrew word for sin signifies rebellion: a sinner doth rebel; now when we mourn for sin, as it is a walking antipodes to heaven, this is a gospel mourning; nature will not bear contraries.

2. We must mourn for sin as it is a piece of the highest ingratitude; it is a kicking against the breasts of mercy. God sends his Son to redeem us, his Spirit to comfort us; we sin against the blood of Christ, the grace of the Spirit, and shall we not mourn? We complain of the unkindness of others; and shall we not lay to heart our own unkindness against God? Cæsar took it unkindly that his son Brutus should stab him, 'and thou my son?' May

not the Lord say to us, 'these wounds I have received in the house of my friends!' Zech. xiii. 6. Israel took their jewels and ear-rings, and made a golden calf of them; the sinner takes the jewels of God's mercies, and makes use of them to sin; ingratitude dies a sin in grain, hence they are called crimson sins, Isa. i. 18. Sins against gospel love are worse in some sense than the sins of the devils, for they never had an offer of grace tendered to them. Now, when we mourn for sin as it hath its accent of ingratitude upon it, this is an evangelical mourning.

3. We must mourn for sin as it is a privation; it keeps good things from us, it hinders our communion with God. Mary wept for Christ's absence, John xx. 13. 'they have taken away my Lord.' So, our sins have taken away our Lord; they have deprived us of his sweet presence. Will not he grieve who hath lost a rich jewel? when we mourn for sin under this notion, as it makes the Sun of Righteousness withdraw from our horizon: when we mourn not so much that peace is gone, and trading is gone, but God is gone: Cant. v. 6. 'My beloved had withdrawn himself;' this is an holy mourning; the mourning for the loss of God's favour, is the best way to regain his favour. If thou hast lost a friend, all thy weeping will not fetch him again: but if thou hast lost God's presence, thy mourning will bring thy God again.

9. Gospel mourning sends the soul to God. When the prodigal son repented, he went to his father, Luke xv. 18. 'I will arise and go unto my father.' Jacob wept and prayed, Hos. xii. 3. The people of 'Israel wept and offered sacrifice,' Judg. ii. 5. Gospel mourning puts a man upon duty; the reason is, because in true sorrow there is a mixture of hope, and hope puts the soul upon the use of means: that mourning which, like the flaming

sword, keeps the soul from approaching to God, and beats it off from duty, is a sinful mourning; it is a sorrow hatched in hell; such was Saul's grief, which drove him to the witch of Endor, 1 Sam. xxviii. 7. Evangelical mourning is a spur to prayer; the child who weeps for offending his father, goes into his presence, and will not leave till his father be reconciled to him. Absalom could not be quiet till 'he had seen the king's face,' 2 Sam. xiv. 32, 33.

4. Gospel mourning is for sin in particular; it is with a true penitent as it is with a wounded man; he comes to the surgeon, and shews him all his wounds; Here I was cut with the sword, here I was shot with a bullet: so a true penitent bewails all his particular sins: Judg. x. 10. 'We have served Baalim;' they mourned for their idolatry; and David lays his finger upon the sore, and points out that very sin that troubled him: Psal. li. 4. I have done this evil;' he means his blood-guiltiness: a wicked man will say he is a sinner; but a child of God saith, I have done this evil. Peter wept for that particular sin of denying Christ? Clemens Alexandrinus saith, he never heard a cock crow, but he fell a weeping: there must be a particular repentance before we have a general pardon.

5. Gospel tears must drop from the eye of faith, Mark ix. 24. 'The father of the child cried out with tears, Lord, I believe:' our disease must make us mourn; but when we look up to our physician, who hath made a plaster of his own blood, we must not mourn without hope; believing tears are precious; when the clouds of sorrow have overcast the soul, some sunshine of faith must break forth; the soul will be swallowed up of sorrow, it will be drowned in tears, if faith be not the bladder to keep it up from sinking; though our tears drop to the earth, our faith must reach heaven; after the great-



est rain, faith must appear as the rainbow in the cloud ; the tears of faith are bottled as precious wine, Psal. lvi. 8.

6. Gospel mourning is mixed with self-loathing ; the sinner doth admire himself, the penitent doth loathe himself, Ezek. xx. 42. ' Ye shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for all your evils.' A true penitentiary is troubled not only for the shameful consequence of sin, but the loathsome nature of sin ; not only the sting of sin, but the deformed face : how did the leper loathe himself ? Lev. xiii. 45. The Hebrew doctors say, the leper, pronounced unclean, was to put a covering on his upper lip, both as a mourner, and in token of shame. The true mourner cries out, O these impure eyes, this heart which is a conclave of wickedness ? he not only leaves sin, but loathes sin ; he that is fallen in the dirt, loathes himself, Hos. xiv. 1.

7. Gospel mourning must be purifying ; our tears must make us more holy ; we must so weep for sin, as to weep out sin ; our tears must drown our sins ; we must not only mourn, but turn, Joel ii. 12. ' Turn to me with weeping : ' What is it to have a watery eye and a whorish heart ? it is foolish to say it is day, when the air is full of darkness : so to say thou repentest, when thou drawest dark shadows in thy life. It is an excellent saying of St. Austin, He doth truly bewail the sins he hath committed, who never commits the sins he hath bewailed. True mourning is like the water of jealousy, Numb. v. 12. it makes the thigh of sin to rot, Psal. lxxiv. 14. ' Thou breakest the heads of the dragons in the waters.' The heads of our sins, these dragons are broken in the waters of true repentance ; true tears are cleansing ; they are like a flood, that carries away all the rubbish of our sins with it ; the waters of holy mourning are like the river Jordan, wherein Naaman washed, and was cleansed of his leprosy,

It is reported there is a river in Sicilia, where, if the blackest sheep are bathed, they become white; so, though our sins be as scarlet, yet by washing in this river of repentance, they become white as snow: naturalists say of the serpent, before it goes to drink, it vomits out its poison; in this be wise as serpents; before thou thinkest to drink down the sweet cordials of the promises, cast up the poison that lies in your heart; do not only mourn for sin, but break from sin.

8. Gospel mourning must be joined with hatred of sin, 2 Cor. vii. 11. What indignation? We must not only abstain from sin, but abhor sin; the dove hates the least feather of the hawk; a true mourner hates the least motion to sin; a true mourner is a sin-hater: Amnon hated Tamar more than ever he loved her, 2 Sam. xiii. 5. To be a sin-hater implies two things. 1. To look upon sin as the most deadly evil, a complicated evil; it looks more ghastly than death or hell. 2. To be implacably incensed against it; a sin-hater will admit of any terms of peace; the war between him and sin, is like the war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam: 1 Kings xiv. 20. 'There was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all their days:' Anger may be reconciled, hatred cannot; true mourning begins in the love of God, and ends in the hatred of sin.

9. Gospel mourning in some cases is joined with restitution; it is as well a sin to violate the name, as the chastity of another; if we have eclipsed the good name of others, we are bound to ask them forgiveness; if we have wronged them in their estate, by unjust, fraudulent dealings, we must make them some compensation. Thus Zaccheus, Luke xix. 8. 'If I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold, according to that law, Exod. xxii. 1. Saint James bids us not only look to the heart, but the hand, James

iv. 8. 'Cleanse your hands ye sinners, and purify your hearts;' if thou hast wronged another, cleanse thy hands by restitution; be assured, without restitution, no remission.

10. Gospel mourning must be a speedy mourning: we must take heed of adjourning our repentance, and putting it off till death; as David said, 'I will pay my vows now,' Psal. cxvi. 18: so should a Christian say, I will mourn for sin now. Luke vi. 21. 'Blessed are ye that weep now;' as Popilius the Roman Legate, when he was sent to Antiochus the king, made a circle round about the king, and bade him make his answer before he went out of that circle; so God hath encircled us in the compass of a little time, and chargeth us presently to bewail our sins. Acts xvii. 30. 'Now God calleth every where to repent;' we know not whether we may have another day granted us. Oh let us not put off our mourning for sin till the making of our will: do not think holy mourning is only a death-bed duty; you may seek the blessing with tears, as Esau, when it is too late. Saith Austin, How long shall I say I will repent to-morrow? why not at this instant? Cæsar's deferring to read the letter before he went to the senate-house, cost him his life. The true mourner makes haste to meet an angry God, as Jacob did his brother, and the present he sends before, is the sacrifice of tears.

11. Gospel mourning for sin is constant; there are some who at a sermon will shed a few tears, but this land-flood is soon dried up; the hypocrite's sorrow is like a vein opened, and presently stopped; the Hebrew word for eye, signifies also a fountain, to shew that the eye must run like a fountain for sin and not cease: but it must not be like the Lybian fountain of the Sun, which the ancients speak of; in the morning the water is hot, at mid-day cold; the waters of repentance must not over-

flow with more heat in the morning, at the first hearing of the gospel ; and at mid-day in the midst of health and prosperity grow cold, and be ready to freeze ; no, it must be a daily weeping, as Paul said, 1 Cor. xvi. 31. ' I die daily ;' so should a Christian say, ' I mourn daily ;' therefore keep open an issue of godly sorrow, and be sure it be not stopped till death, Lam. ii. 18. ' Let not the apple of thine eye cease.' It is reported of holy Mr. Bradford, scarce a day passed him wherein he did not shed some tears for sin ; daily mourning is a good antidote against backsliding. I have read of one that had an epilepsy or falling-sickness, and being dipped in sea-water, was cured ; the washing of our souls daily in the brinish waters of repentance, is the best way both to prevent and cure the falling into relapses.

Even God's own children must mourn after pardon ; for God, in pardoning, doth not pardon, at one instant, sins past and future ; but as repentance is renewed, so pardon is renewed ; should God, by one act pardon sins future as well as past, this would make void part of Christ's office : What need were there of his intercession, if sin should be pardoned before it be committed ? there are sins in the godly of daily incursion, which must be mourned for ; though sin be pardoned, still it rebels ; though it be covered, it is not cured, Rom. vii. 23. There is that in the best Christian, which is contrary to God ; there is that in him which deserves hell, and shall he not mourn ? A ship that is always leaking, must have the water continually pumped out ; while the soul leaks by sin, we must be still pumping at the leak by repentance. Think not, O Christian, that thy sins are washed away only by Christ's blood, but by water and blood. The brazen laver, Ex. xxx. 18. that the people of Israel were to wash in, might be a fit emblem of this spiritual laver, tears

and blood; and when holy mourning is thus qualified, this is, 2 Cor. vii. 11. that 'sorrowing after a godly sort,' which makes a Christian eternally blessed.

#### SECT. 4.

*Shewing, That we must mourn for the sins of others.*

2. As we must mourn for our own sins, so we must lay to heart the sins of others. The poets feign that Biblis was turned into a fountain; thus we should wish with Jeremy, that our eyes were a fountain of tears, that we might weep day and night for the iniquity of the times; our blessed Saviour mourned for the sins of the Jews, Mark iii. 5. 'Being grieved for the hardness (or brawniness) of their hearts;' and holy David, looking upon the sins of the wicked, his heart was turned into a spring, and his eyes into rivers, Ps. cxix. 136. 'Rivers of tears run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy law.' Lot's righteous soul 'was vexed with the unclean conversation of the wicked,' 2 Pet. ii. 7. Lot took the sins of Sodom, and made spears of them to pierce his own soul: Cyprian saith, that in the primitive times, when a virgin, who vowed herself to religion, had defiled her chastity, shame and grief filled the whole face of the congregation.

Have not we cause to mourn for the sins of others? the whole axle-tree of the nation is ready to break under the weight of sin; what an inundation of wickedness is there amongst us? Mourn for the hypocrisy of the times. Jehu saith, 'Come see my zeal for the Lord;' but it was zeal for the throne. This is hypocrisy of some, they entitle God to whatever they do, they make bold with God to use his name to their wickedness; as if a thief should pretend the king's warrant for his robbery. Micah

iii. 11. 'They build up Sion with blood, the heads thereof judge for reward; yet will they lean upon the Lord, and say, Is not the Lord among us?' Many with a religious kiss smite the gospel under the fifth rib: could not Ahab be content to kill and take possession; but must he usher it in with religion, and make fasting a preface to his murder? 1 Kings xxi. 12. The white devil is worst; a burning torch in the hand of a ghost is most affrighting; to hear the name of God in the mouths of scandalous hypocrites, is enough to affright others from the profession of religion.

Mourn for the errors and blasphemies of the nation; there is now a free trade of error; toleration gives men a patent to sin; what cursed opinion that hath been long ago buried in the church, but is now digged out of the grave, and by some worshipped! England is grown as wanton in her religion, as she is antic in her fashions: the Jesuite's exchange is open, and every one almost is for an opinion of the newest cut: did men's faces alter as fast as their judgments, we should not know them.

Mourn for covenant-violation, this sin is a flying roll against England: breach of covenant is spiritual harlotry; and for this God may name us Lo-ammi, and give us a bill of divorce.

Mourn for the pride of the nation; our condition is low, but our hearts are high. Mourn for the profaneness of the land; Britain is like that man in the gospel, Luke iv. 33. who had 'a spirit of an unclean devil.' Mourn for the removing of land-marks: mourn for the contempt offered to magistracy, the spitting in the face of authority: mourn that there are so few mourners; surely if we mourn not for the sin of others, it is to be feared we are not sensible of our own sins: God looks upon us as guilty of those sins in others which we

do not lament ; our tears may help to quench God's wrath.

### SECT. 5.

*That we must mourn for the Miseries of the church.*

The saints are members of the body mystical as well as political, therefore must be sensible of the injuries of God's church. Psal. cxxxvii. 1. 'We wept when we remembered Zion.' The people of Israel being debarred from the place of public worship, sat by the rivers weeping ; they laid aside all their musical instruments. ver. 2. 'We hanged our harps upon the willows.' We were as far from joy, as those willows were from fruit. Ver. 4. 'How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land ?' we were fitter to weep than to sing.

When we consider the miseries of many Christians in Germany, the dukedom of Savoy, and other foreign parts, who have been driven from their habitations, because they would not desert the protestant, and espouse the popish religion ; when instead of a Bible, a crucifix ; instead of prayers, mass ; instead of going to church, they should go on pilgrimage to some saint or relic : when we consider these things, our eyes should run down : mourn to see God's church a bleeding vine : mourn to see Christ's spouse with garments rolled in blood.

Methinks I hear England's passing bell go, let us shed some tears over dying England ; let us bewail our intestine divisions. England's divisions have been fatal ; they brought in the Saxons, Danes, Normans ; if a kingdom divided cannot stand, how do we stand, but by a miracle of free grace ? Truth is fallen, and peace is fled. England's fine coat of peace is torn, and, like Joseph's coat, dipped in blood. Peace is the glory of a nation. Some ob-

serve if the top of the beech tree be taken off, the whole tree withers. Peace is the apex and top of all earthly blessings; this top being cut off, we may truly say the body of the whole nation begins to wither apace.

Mourn for the oppressions of England; the people of this land have laid out their money only to buy mourning.

SECT. 6.

*Shewing the seasons of holy Mourning.*

Though we must always keep open the issue of godly sorrow, yet there are some seasons wherein our tears should overflow, as the water sometimes riseth higher; there are three special seasons of extraordinary mourning, when it should be as it were high-water in the soul.

*Season 1.* When there are tokens of God's wrath breaking forth in the nation. England hath been under God's black rod these many years; the Lord hath drawn the sword, and it is not yet put up; O that our tears may blunt the edge of this sword; when it is a time of treading down, now is a time of breaking up the fallow ground of our hearts, Isa. xxii. 4, 5. 'Therefore said I, look away from me, I will weep bitterly, for it is a time of treading down. Joel. ii. 2, 13. 'A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds, &c. therefore turn ye even to me with weeping and with mourning.' Rain follows thunder: When God thunders in a nation by his judgments, now the showers of tears must distil: When God smites upon our back, we must smite upon our thigh, Jer. xxxi. 19. When God seems to stand upon the threshold of the temple, as if he were ready to take his wings and fly, Ezek. x. 4. then is a time to lie weeping between the porch and the altar.



If the Lord seems to be packing up and carrying away his gospel, it is now high time to mourn, that by our tears possibly his repentings may be kindled.

*Season 2.* Before the performing' solemn duties of God's worship, as fasting or receiving the Lord's supper. Christian, art thou to seek God in an extraordinary manner? 'seek him sorrowing,' Luke ii. 48. Wouldst thou have the smiles of God's face, the kisses of his lips? set open all the springs of mourning, and then God will draw nigh to thee in an ordinance and say, 'Here I am,' Isa. lviii. 9. When Jacob wept, then he 'found God in Bethel,' Hos. xii. 4. 'He named the name of the place Peniel, for (saith he) I have seen God face to face,' Gen. xxxii. 30. Give Christ the wine of thy tears to drink, and in the sacrament he will give thee the wine of his blood to drink.

*Season 3.* After scandalous relapses: though I will not say with Donatus there is no mercy for sins of recidivation or relapse, yet I say there is no mercy without bitter mourning. Scandalous sins reflect dishonour upon religion, 2 Sam. xii. 14. therefore now our cheeks should be covered with blushing, and our eyes bedewed with tears. Peter, after his denying Christ, wept bitterly: Christian, hath God given thee over to any enormous sin, as a just reward of thy pride and security, go into the weeping bath. Sins of infirmity injure the soul, but scandalous sins wound the gospel. Lesser sins grieve the Spirit, but greater sins vex the Spirit: Isa. lxiii. 9. And if that blessed dove weeps, shall not we weep? when the air is dark, then the dew falls; when we have by scandalous sin darkened the lustre of the gospel, now is the time for the dew of holy tears to fall from our eyes.

SECT. 7.

*Setting forth the degrees of Mourning.*

Next to the seasons of mourning, let us consider the degree of it; the mourning for sin must be a very great mourning; Zech. xii. 10. 'They shall look on me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one that mourneth for his only son.' The sorrow for an only child is very great; such must be the sorrow for sin. Ver. 11. 'In that day there shall be great mourning, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon.' In that valley Josiah, that famous and pious prince, was cut off by an untimely death, at whose funeral there was bitter lamentation: thus bitterly must we bewail, not the death, but the life of our sins. Now then to set forth the gradation of sorrow:

1. Our mourning for sin must be so great, as to exceed all other grief. Eli's mourning for the ark was such that it swallowed up the loss of his two children; spiritual grief must preponderate all other: we should mourn more for sin than the loss of friends or estate.

2. We should endeavour to have our sorrow rise up to the same height and proportion as our sin doth. Manasseh was a great sinner, and a great mourner: 2 Chron. xxxiii. 12. 'He humbled himself greatly.' Manasseh made the streets run with blood, and he made the prison in Babylon run with tears. 'Peter wept bitterly.' A true mourner labours that his repentance may be as eminent as his sin is transcendent.

SECT. 8.

*Shewing the opposite to holy Mourning.*

Having shewn the nature of mourning, I shall next shew what is the opposite to holy mourning.

The opposite to mourning, is hardness of heart, which in scripture is called 'an heart of stone,' Ezek. xxxvi. An heart of stone is far from mourning and relenting; this heart of stone is known by two symptoms.

1. Insensibility: A stone is not sensible of any thing; lay weight upon it, grind it to powder, it doth not feel; so it is with an hard heart, it is insensible of sin or wrath; the stone in the kidneys is felt, but not the stone in the heart. Eph. iv. 19. 'Who being past feeling.'

2. An heart of stone is known by its inflexibility: a stone will not bend; so it is with an hard heart, it will not comply with God's command, it will not stoop to Christ's sceptre; an heart of stone will sooner break by death, than bend by repentance; it is so far from yielding to God, that with the anvil it beats back the hammer; it 'resists the Holy Ghost,' Acts vii. 51.

Oh Christians, if you would be spiritual mourners, take heed of this stone of the heart, Heb. iii. 7.

'Harden not your hearts.' A stony heart is the worst heart; if it were brazen, it might be melted in the furnace; if iron, it might be bended with the hammer; but a stony heart is such, that only the arm of God can break, and the blood of God can soften. O the misery of an hard heart! 1. An hard heart is void of all grace; while the wax is hard, it will not take the impression of the seal; the heart, while it is hard, will not take the stamp of grace; it must first be made tender and melting; the plow of the word will not go upon an hard heart.

2. An hard heart is good for nothing but to make fuel for hell-fire, Rom. v. 2. 'After thy hardness of heart thou treasurest up wrath.' Hell is full of hard hearts, there is not one soft heart there; there is weeping there, but no softness: we read of vessels fitted for destruction, Rom. ix. 22. Impeni-

tency fits these vessels for hell, and makes them like sere wood, which is fit to burn. 3. Hardness of heart makes a man's condition worse than all his other sins besides; if one be guilty of great sins, yet if he can mourn there is hope: repentance unravels sin, and makes sin not to be; but hardness of heart binds guilt fast upon the soul, it seals a man under wrath; it is not the heinousness of sin, but hardness of heart that damns; this makes the sin against the Holy Ghost incapable of mercy, because the sinner that hath committed it, is incapable of repentance.

## CHAP. VII.

*Containing a sharp Reprehension.*

*Use 1.* **T**HIS doctrine draws up a charge against several sorts.

1. Those that think themselves good Christians, yet have not learned this art of holy mourning. Luther calls mourning a rare herb. Men have tears to shed for other things, but have none to spare for their sins; there are many murmurers, but few mourners; most are like the stony ground, which wanted moisture, Matthew xiii. We have many cry out of hard times, but are not sensible of hard hearts; hot and dry is the worst temper of the body; sure I am, to be hot in sin, and to be so dry as to have no tears, is the worst temper of the soul: how many are like Gideon's dry fleece, and like the mountains of Gilboa, there is 'no dew upon them.' Did Christ bleed for sin, and canst not thou weep? If God's bottle be not filled with tears, his vial will be filled with wrath. We have many sinners in Sion, but few mourners in Sion. It is with most people, as with a man on the top of a mast, the winds blow, and the waves beat, and the ship is in danger of shipwreck, and he is fast asleep; so when

the waves of sin have even covered men, and the stormy wind of God's wrath blows, and is ready to blow them into hell, yet they are asleep in security.

2. It reproves them who, instead of weeping for sin, spend their days in mirth and jollity; instead of mourners, we have ranters; they take the 'timbrel and harp, they spend their days in wealth,' Job xxi. 18. they do not *lugere animo*, but *indulgere genio*; they live epicures and die atheists: St. James bids us 'turn our laughter to mourning.' James iv. 9. But they turn their mourning to laughter. Samson was brought forth to make the Philistines sport, Judg. xvi. 26. The jovial sinner doth make the devil sport; it is a saying of Theophilact, It is one of the worst sights to see a sinner go laughing to hell: how unseasonable is it to take the harp and viol when God is taking the sword! Ezek. xxi. 9, 19. A sword, a sword is sharpened, and also furbished, should we then make mirth? this is a sin that enrageth God. Isa. xxii, 12, 13. 'In that day did the Lord of hosts call to weeping and to mourning, and behold joy and gladness, slaying oxen, and killing sheep, eating flesh, and drinking wine; and it was revealed in mine ears by the Lord God of hosts.' That is, this your sin shall not be done away by any expiatory sacrifice, but vengeance shall pursue you for ever.

3. It reproves those, who instead of mourning for sin, rejoice in sin. Prov. ii. 14. 2 Thess. ii. 12. 'Who take pleasure in iniquity:' wicked men are worse in this sense than the wicked in hell; for I dare say they take little pleasure in their sins: there are some so impudently profane, that they will make themselves and others merry with their sins; sin is a soul-sickness: Luke v. 31. will a man make merry with his disease? Ah wretch, did Christ bleed for sin, and dost thou laugh at sin? Is that thy

mirth which grieves the Spirit? Is it a time for a man to break jests when he is upon the scaffold, and his head to be struck off? Thou that laughest at sin now, the time is coming, when God will 'laugh at thy calamity,' Prov. i. 26.

4. It reproves those that cry down mourning for sin; they are like the Philistines who stopped the wells, Gen. xxvi. 15. These would stop the wells of godly sorrow: Antinomians say this is a legal doctrine; but Christ here preacheth it, 'Blessed are they that mourn;' and the apostles preached it, Mark vi. 11. 'And they went out and preached that men should repent.' Holy ingenuity will put us upon mourning for sin; he that hath the heart of a child, cannot but weep for his unkindness against God. Mourning for sin is the very fruit and product of the Spirit of grace, Zech. xii. 10. Such as cry down repentance, cry down the Spirit of grace: mourning for sin is the only way to keep off wrath from us; such as, with Samson, would break this pillar, go about to pull down the vengeance of God upon the land. To all such, I say as Peter to Simon Magus, Acts viii. 22. 'Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of thy heart may be forgiven thee.' O sinner, repent that thou hast cried down repentance.

## CHAP. VIII.

### *Motives to holy Mourning.*

*Use 2.* **LET** me exhort Christians to holy mourning: I now persuade to such a mourning as will prepare the soul for blessedness. O that our hearts were spiritual limbeck, distilling the water of holy tears! Christ's doves weep, Ezek. vii. 16. 'They that escape shall be like doves of the valleys, all of them mourning, every one for his ini-

quity.' There are several divine motives to holy mourning.

1. *Motive.* Tears cannot be put to a better use : if you weep for outward losses, you lose your tears ; it is like a shower upon a rock, which doth no good ; but tears for sin are blessed tears ; ' Blessed are they that mourn.' These poison out corruptions ; salt water kills the worms ; the brinish water of repenting tears will help to kill that worm of sin which would gnaw the conscience.

2. *Motive.* Gospel-mourning is an evidence of grace, Zech. xii. 10. ' I will pour upon the house of David, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and they shall mourn,' &c. The Holy Ghost descended on Christ like a dove, Matt. iii. The dove is a weeping creature ; where there is a dove-like weeping, it is a good sign the Spirit of God hath descended there ; weeping for sin is a sign of the new birth ; as soon as the child is born, it weeps, Exod. ii. 3. ' And behold the babe wept.' To weep kindly for sin, is a good sign we are born of God. Mourning shews an heart of flesh, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. A stone will not melt ; when the heart is in a melting frame, it is a sign the heart of stone is taken away.

3. *Motive.* The preciousness of tears : tears dropping from a mournful, penitent eye, are like the water dropping from roses, very sweet and precious to God ; a fountain in the garden makes it pleasant ; that heart is most delightful to God, which hath a fountain of sorrow running in it. ' Mary stood at Christ's feet weeping,' Luke vii. 38. Her tears were more fragrant and odoriferous than her ointment ; the incense when it is broken smells sweetest ; when the heart is broken for sin, now our services give forth their sweetest perfume. ' There is joy in heaven over a sinner that repenteth,' Luke xv. 7. Whereupon St. Bernard calls tears the wine

of angels; and sure God delights much in tears, else he would not keep a bottle for them, Psal. lvi. 8. One calls tears a fat sacrifice, which under the law was most acceptable, Lev. iii. 3. St. Hierom calls mourning a plank after shipwreck: Chrysostom calls tears a sponge to wipe off sin; tears are powerful orators for mercy. Eusebius saith there was an altar at Athens, on which they poured no other sacrifice but tears; as if the heathens thought there was no better way to pacify their angry gods, than by weeping: Jacob wept, and had 'power over the angel,' Hos. xii. 4. Tears melt the heart of God. When a malefactor comes weeping to the bar, this melts the judge's heart towards him: when a man comes weeping in prayer, and smites on his breast, saying, 'God be merciful to me a sinner.' this doth melt God's heart towards him. Prayer, saith Hierom, inclines God to shew mercy, tears compel him; God seals his pardons on melting hearts; tears, though they are silent yet have a voice, Ps. vi. 8. Tears wash away sin; rain melts and washeth away a ball of snow; repenting tears wash away sin. That sin, saith Ambrose, which cannot be defended by argument, may be washed away by tears.

4. *Motive.* The sweetness of tears; mourning is the way to solid joy; the sweetest wine is that which comes out of the wine-press of the eyes; the soul is never more enlarged than when it can weep. Closet tears are better than court music. When the heart is sad, weeping easeth it by giving vent: the soul of a Christian is most eased, when it can vent itself by holy mourning; Chrysostom observes, David, who was the great mourner in Israel, was the sweet singer in Israel, Psal. xliii. 3. 'My tears were my meat:' on which place Ambrose gives this gloss; No meat so sweet as tears: the tears of the penitent, saith Bernard, are sweeter than all worldly joy: a Christian thinks himself sometimes in the sub-



urbs of heaven when he can weep: when Hannah had wept, she went away, and was no more sad: sugar, when it melts, is sweetest; when a Christian melts in tears, now he hath the sweetest joy; when the daughter of Pharaoh descended into the river, she found a babe there among the flags; so, when we descend into the river of repenting tears, we find the babe Jesus there, who shall wipe away all tears from our eyes. Well therefore might Chrysostom solemnly bless God for giving to us this laver of tears to wash in.

5. *Motive.* A mourner for sin doth not only good to himself, but to others; he helps to keep off wrath from a land: as when Abraham was going to strike the blow, the angel staid his hand, Gen. xxii. 12. so, when God is going to destroy a nation, the mourner stays his hand; tears in the child's eye sometimes moves the angry father to spare the child; penitential tears melt God's heart, and bind his hand; Jeremy, who was a weeping prophet, was a great intercessor; God saith to him, 'pray not for this people.' Jer. vii. 16. as if the Lord had said, Jeremy, so powerful are thy prayers and tears, that if thou prayest, I cannot deny thee: tears have a mighty influence upon God: sure God hath some mourners in the land, or he had destroyed us before now.

6. *Motive.* Holy mourning is preventing physic; our mourning for sin here, will prevent mourning in hell; hell is a place of weeping, Matt. viii. 12. the damned mingle their drink with weeping. God is said to hold his bottle for our tears, Psal. lvi. 8. They who will not shed a bottle full of tears, shall hereafter shed rivers of tears. Luke vi. 25. 'Woe to you that laugh now, for ye shall mourn.' You have sometimes seen sugar lying in a damp place dissolve to water; all the sugared joys of the wicked dissolve at last to the water of tears; now tears

will do us good, now it is seasonable weeping, it is like a shower in the spring ; if we do not weep now, it will be too late : did we hear the language of the damned, they are now cursing themselves that they did not weep soon enough. O is it not better to have our hell here, than hereafter ? is it not better to shed repenting tears than despairing tears ? he that weeps here is a blessed mourner ; he that weeps in hell is a cursed mourner. The physician by letting the patient blood, prevents death ; by the opening a vein of godly sorrow, we prevent the death of our souls.

7. There is no other way the gospel prescribes to blessedness but this, ‘ Blessed are they that mourn ;’ this is the road that leads to the new Jerusalem. There may be several ways leading to a city, some go one way, some another ; but there is but one way to heaven, and that is by Bethlehem the house of weeping, Acts xxvi. 20. Perhaps a man may think thus, If I cannot mourn for sin, I will get to heaven some other way ; I will go to church, I will give alms, I will lead a civil life : nay, but I tell you there is but one way to blessedness, and that is through the valley of tears ; if you go not this way you will miss of paradise, Luke xiii. 3. ‘ I tell you nay, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.’ There are many lines leading to the centre ; but the heavenly centre hath but one line leading to it, and that is, a tear dropping from the eye of faith ; a man may have a disease in his body that twenty medicines will heal, sin is a disease of the soul, which makes it sick unto death ; now there is but one medicine will heal, and that is the medicine of repentance.

8. *Motive.* Consider what need every Christian hath to be conversant in holy mourning ; a man may take physic when he hath no need of it ; many go to the bath when they have no need ; it is rather out of

curiosity than necessity. But O what need is there for every one to go into the weeping bath ! think what a sinner thou hast been ; thou hast filled God's book with thy debts, and what need hast thou to fill his bottle with thy tears ? thou hast lived in secret sin, God enjoins thee this penance, mourn for sin : but perhaps some may say, I have no need of mourning, for I have lived a very civil life ; go home and mourn because thou art but civil ; many a man's civility being rested upon, hath damned him. It is sad for men to be without repentance, but it is worse to need no repentance, Luke xv. 7.

9. *Motive.* Tears are but finite ; it is but a while that we shall weep ; after a few showers that fall from our eyes we shall have a perpetual sunshine ; in heaven the bottle of tears is stopt, Rev. vii. ult. ' God shall wipe away all tears ; ' when sin shall cease, tears shall cease, Ps. xxx. 4. ' Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning ; in the morning of the ascension, then shall all tears be wiped away.

10. *Motive.* The benefit of holy mourning ; the best of our commodities come by water.

1. Mourning doth make the soul fruitful in grace. When a shower falls, the herbs and plants grow. Is. xvi. 9. ' I will water thee with my tears, O Heshbon.' I may allude to it ; tears water our graces, and make them flourish, Psal. civ. 10. ' he sends his springs into the vallies ; ' that is the reason the vallies flourish with corn, because the springs run there ; where the springs of sorrow run, there the heart bears a fruitful crop : Leah was tender eyed, and was fruitful ; the tender eyed Christian usually bears more of the fruits of the Spirit ; a weeping eye is the water-pot to water our graces.

2. Mourning doth fence us against the devil's tentations : tentations are called fiery darts, Eph. vi. 16. because indeed they set the soul on fire ; ten-

tations enrage anger, inflame lust ; now the waters of holy mourning quench these fiery darts ; wet powder will not soon take fire ; when the heart is wetted and moistened with sorrow, it will not so easily take the fire of temptation ; tears are the best engines and water-works to quench the devil's fire ; and if there be so much profit and benefit in gospel-sorrow, then let every Christian wash his face every morning in the laver of tears.

11. *Motive.* And lastly, to have a melting frame of spirit, is a great sign of God's presence with us in an ordinance ; it is a sign the Sun of Righteousness hath risen upon us, when our frozen hearts thaw and melt for sin : it is a saying of St. Bernard, By this you may know whether you have met with God in a duty, when you find yourselves in a melting and mourning frame ; we are apt to measure all by comfort ; we think we never have God's presence in an ordinance, unless we have joy ; herein we are like Thomas ; ' unless (saith he) I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, I will not believe,' John xx. 25. So we are apt to say, Unless we have incomes of comfort we will not believe that we have found God in a duty ? but if our hearts can melt kindly in tears of love, this is a real sign that God hath been with us ; as Jacob said, Gen. xxviii. 16. ' Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not.' So Christian, when thy heart breaks for sin, and dissolves into holy tears, God is in this duty, though thou knowest it not.

Methinks all that hath been said, should make us spiritual mourners ; perhaps we have tried to mourn and cannot ; but therefore, as a man that hath digged so many fathoms deep for water, and can find none, at last he digs till he finds a spring, so, tho' we have been digging for the water of tears, and can find none, yet let us weigh all that hath been said, and set our hearts again to work, and perhaps

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at last we may say as Isaac's servants, Gen. xxvi. 32. 'We have found water : ' when the herbs are pressed, the watery juice comes out : these eleven serious motives may press out tears from the eye.

*Quest.* But may some say, My constitution is such that I cannot weep ; I may as well go to squeeze a rock, as think to get a tear.

*Ans.* But if thou canst not weep for sin, canst thou grieve ? Intellectual mourning is best ; there may be sorrow where there are no tears, the vessel may be full, though it wants vent ; it is not so much the weeping eye God respects, as the broken heart ; yet I would be loath to stop their tears who can weep ; God stood looking on Hezekiah's tears, Isa. xxxviii. 5, ' I have seen thy tears.' David's tears made music in God's ears, Psal vi. 8. ' The Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping.' It is a sight fit for angels to behold, tears as pearls dropping from a penitent eye.

## CHAP. IX.

### *Shewing the Hindrances of Mourning.*

*Quest.* **B**UT what shall we do to get our heart into this mourning frame ?

*Ans.* Do two things. 1. Take heed of those things which will stop these channels of mourning. 2. Put yourselves upon the use of all means that will help forward holy mourning.

1. Take heed of those things which will stop the current of tears ; there are nine hindrances of mourning.

1. *Hind.* The love of sin ; the love of sin is like a stone in the pipe, which hinders the current of water ; the love of sin makes sin taste sweet, and this sweetness is sin bewitching the heart : St. Hierom saith, it is worse to love sin than to commit it :

a man may be overtaken with sin, Gal. vi. 1. and he that hath stumbled upon sin unawares, will weep; but the love of sin hardens the heart, keeps the devil in possession: in true mourning there must be a grieving for sin; but how can a man grieve for that sin which his heart is in love with? O take heed of this sweet poison; the love of sin freezeth the soul in impenitency.

2. *Hind.* Despair: despair affronts God, undervalues Christ's blood, damns the soul, Jer. viii. 12. 'They said there is no hope, but we will walk after our own devices, and we will every one do the imagination of his evil heart:' This is the language of despair, there is no hope, I had as good follow my sins still, and be damned for something; despair presents God to the soul as a judge clad in the garments of vengeance, Isa. lix. 17. Judas' despair was in some sense worse than his treason. Despair destroys repentance; for the proper ground of repentance is mercy. Rom. ii. 4. 'The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance.' But despair hides mercy out of sight, as the cloud covered the ark, Ex. xxxix. O take heed of this; despair is an irrational sin, there is no ground for it; the Lord shews mercy to thousands, why mayest thou not be one of a thousand? the wings of God's mercy, like the wings of the cherubims, are stretched out to every humble penitent; though thou hast been a great sinner, yet if thou art a weeping sinner, there is a golden sceptre of mercy held forth, Psal. ciii. 11. Despair locks up the soul in impenitency.

3. *Hind.* A conceit that this mourning will make us melancholy: we shall drown all our joy in our tears; but this is a mistake. Lose our joy! tell me what joy can there be in a natural condition? what joy doth sin afford? Is not sin compared to a wound and a bruise? Is. i. 6. David had his broken bones, Psal. li. Is there any comfort in having the bones

out of joint? doth not sin breed a palpitation and trembling of heart? Deut. xxviii. 66. Is it any joy for a man to be a Magor-missabib, a terror to himself? Surely of the sinner's laughter it may be said, 'it is mad,' Eccl. ii. 2. whereas holy mourning is the breeder of joy; it doth not eclipse, but refine our joy, and make it better; the prodigal dated his joy from the time of his repentance, Luke xv. 24. 'Then they began to be merry.'

4. *Hind.* Checking the motions of the Spirit; the Spirit sets us a mourning, it causeth all our spring-tides, Psal. lxxxvii. 7. 'All my springs are in thee.' Oft we meet with gracious motions to prayer and repentance; now when we stifle these motions, which is called a 'quenching the Spirit,' 1 Thess. v. 19. then do we, as it were, hinder the tide from coming in. When the dew falls, then the ground is wet; when the Spirit of God falls as dew in its influences upon the soul, then it is moistened with sorrow; but if the Spirit withdraw, the soul is like Gideon's dry fleece: a ship can as well sail without the wind, a bird can as well fly without wings, as we can mourn without the Spirit. Take heed of grieving the Spirit; do not drive away this sweet dove from the ark of thy soul. The Spirit, if he be grieved, may say, I will come no more; and if he once withdraw we cannot mourn.

5. *Hind.* Presumption of mercy: Who will take pains with his heart, or mourn for sin, that thinks he may be saved at a cheaper rate? How many, spider like, suck damnation out of the sweet flower of God's mercy! Jesus Christ, who came into the world to save sinners, is the occasion of many a man's perishing. O saith one, Christ died for me, he hath done all; What need I pray or mourn? Many a bold sinner plucks death from the tree of life, and through presumption, goes to hell by that ladder of Christ's blood by which others go to

heaven. It is sad when the goodness of God, which should 'lead to repentance,' Rom. iv. 2. leads to presumption: O sinner, do not hope thyself into hell; take heed of being damned upon a mistake. Thou sayest God is merciful, therefore goest on securely in sin. But who is mercy for? the presuming sinner, or the mourning sinner? Isa. lv. 7. 'Let the wicked forsake his way, and return to the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him;' no mercy without forsaking sin; and no forsaking sin without mourning. If a king should say to a company of rebels, whosoever comes in and submits, shall have mercy; such as stood out in rebellion, could not claim the benefit of the pardon. God makes a proclamation of mercy to the mourner; but such as are not mourners, have nothing to do with mercy. The mercy of God is like the ark, which none but the priests were to meddle with; none may touch this golden ark of mercy but such as are 'priests unto God,' Rev. i. 6. and have offered up the sacrifice of tears.

6. *Hind.* A conceit of the smallness of sin: Gen. xix. 20. 'Is it not a little one?' The devil holds the small end of the perspective-glass to sinners. To fancy sin less than it is, is very dangerous: an opinion of the littleness of sin keeps us from the use of means. Who will be earnest for a physician that thinks it is but a trivial disease? and who will seek to God with a penitent heart for mercy, that thinks sin is but a slight thing? but to take off this wrong conceit about sin, and that we may look upon it with watery eyes: consider,

1. Sin cannot be little, because it is against the Majesty of heaven; there is no treason small, it being against the king's person.

2. Every sin is sinful, therefore damnable: a penknife or stiletto makes but a little wound, but either of them may kill as well as a greater wea-



poor: there is death and hell in every sin, Rom. vi. 23. What was it for Adam to pluck an apple? but that lost him his crown. It is not with sin as it is with diseases, some are mortal, some not mortal; the least sin, without repentance, will be a lock and bolt to shut men out of heaven.

8. View sin in the red glass of Christ's sufferings; the least sin cost 'the price of blood.' Would you take a true prospect of sin, go to Golgotha. Jesus Christ was fain to veil his glory, and lose his joy, and pour out his soul an offering for the least sin; read the greatness of thy sin in the deepness of Christ's wounds. Let not Satan cast such a mist before your eyes, that you cannot see sin in its right colours. Remember, not only great rivers fall into the sea, but little brooks; not only great sins carry men to hell, but lesser.

7. *Hind.* Procrastination; or an opinion it is too soon yet to tune the penitential string. When the lamp is almost out, the strength exhausted, and old age comes on, then mourning for sin will be in season, but it is too soon yet. That I may shew how pernicious this opinion is, and that I may roll away this stone from the mouth of the well, that so the waters of repentance may be drawn forth, let me propose these four serious and weighty considerations.

1. Dost thou know what it is to be in the state of nature, and wilt thou say it is too soon to get out of it? thou art under the wrath of God. John iii. 36. and is it too soon to get from under the dropping of this vial? thou art under the power of Satan, Acts xxvi. 18. and is it too soon to get out of the enemies' quarters?

2. Men do not argue thus in other cases; they do not say, it is too soon to be rich; they will not put off the getting of riches till old age; no, here they take the first opportunity: it is not too soon

to be rich, and is it too soon to be good? is not repentance a matter of the greatest consequence? is it not more needful for men to lament their sin, than augment their estate?

3. God's call to mourning looks for present entertainment, Heb. iii. 7, 8. 'To day if ye will hear his voice harden not your hearts.' A general besieging a garrison, summons it to surrender upon such a day, or he will storm it. Such are God's summons to repentance, 'To day if ye will hear his voice;' sinners, when Satan hath tempted you to any wickedness, you have not said, it is too soon, Satan, but have presently embraced his temptation: have you not put the devil off, and will you put God off?

4. It is a foolish thing to adjourn and put off mourning for sin; for, 1. The longer you put off holy mourning, the harder you will find the work when you come to it. A bone that is out of joint is easier set at first than if you let it go longer. A disease taken in time is sooner cured than if it be let alone till it comes to a paroxysm. You may easily wade over the waters when they are low: if you stay till they are risen, they will be beyond your depth. O sinner, the more treason thou committest, the more dost thou incense heaven against thee, and the harder it will be to get thy pardon; the longer thou spinnest out the time of thy sinning, the more work thou makest for repentance. 2. To adjourn and put off mourning for sin is folly, in respect of the uncertainty of life; how doth the procrastinating sinner know that he shall live to be old? 'What is your life? it is but a vapour,' James iv. 14. How soon may sickness arrest thee, and death strike off thy head? may not thy sun set at noon? Oh, then what imprudence is it to put off mourning for sin, and to make a long work, when death is about to make a short work? Cæsar deferring to read the let-

ter sent him, was stabbed in the senate-house. 3. It is folly to put off all till the last, in respect of the improbability of finding mercy; though God give thee space to repent, he may deny thee grace to repent. When God calls for mourning and thou art deaf, when thou callest for mercy God may be dumb, Prov. i. 24, 28. Think of it seriously, God may take the latter time to judge thee in, because thou dost not take the former time to repent in. 4. To respite our solemn turning to God till old age or sickness is high imprudence, because these late acts of devotion are for the most part dissembled and spurious. Though true mourning for sin be never too late, yet late mourning is seldom true. That repentance is seldom true-hearted, which is gray-headed: it is disputable whether these autumn-tears are not shed more out of fear of hell than love to God. The mariner in a storm throws his goods overboard, not but that he loves them, but he is afraid they will sink the ship; when men fall to weeping work late, and would cast their sins overboard, it is for the most part only for fear lest they should sink the ship and drown in hell; it is a great question whether the sick-bed penitent doth not mourn because he can keep his sins no longer. All which considered, may make men take heed of running their souls upon such a desperate hazard as to put all their work for heaven upon the last hour.

8. Delay of the execution of justice. Eccl. viii. 11. 'Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the hearts of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.' God forbears punishing, therefore men forbear repenting. He doth not smite upon their back by correction, therefore they do not 'smite upon their thigh' by humiliation, Jer. xxxi. 19. The sinner thinks thus, God hath spared me all this while, he hath eked out patience into long-suffering; sure he will not

punish, Psal. x. 11. 'He hath said in his heart, God hath forgotten.' God sometimes in infinite patience adjourns his judgments, and puts off the sessions a while longer; he is not willing to punish, 2 Pet. iii. 9. The bee naturally gives honey, but stings only when it is angered. The Lord would have men make their peace with him, Isa. xxvii. 5. God is not like an hasty creditor, that requires the debt, and will give no time for the payment; he is not only gracious, but 'waits to be gracious;' Isa. xxx. 18. but God by his patience would bribe sinners to repentance; but alas! how is this patience abused; God's long-suffering hardens; because God stops the vial of his wrath, sinners stop the conduit of tears. That the patience of God may not, through our corruption, obstruct holy mourning, let sinners remember: 1. God's patience hath bounds set to it, Gen. vi. 8. Though men will not set bounds to their sin, yet God sets bounds to his patience; there is a time when the sun of God's patience will set; and it being once set, it never returns any degrees backward: the lease of patience will soon be run out: there is a time when God saith, 'My Spirit shall no longer strive.' The angel cried, 'the hour of his judgment is come.' Rev. xiv. 7. Perhaps the next sin thou committest, God may say, Thy hour is now come. 2. To be hardened under patience, makes our condition far worse; incensed justice will revenge abused patience; God was patient with Sodom, but not repenting, he made the fire and brimstone flame about their ears. Sodom, that was once the wonder of God's patience, is now a standing monument of God's severity; all the plants and fruits are destroyed; and as Tertullian saith, that place still smells of fire and brimstone. Long forbearance is no forgiveness; God may keep off the stroke a while, but justice is not dead but sleepeth. God hath laden feet,

but iron hands ; the longer God is taking his blow, the sorer it will be when it comes ; the longer a stone is falling, the heavier it will be at last ; the longer God is whetting his sword, the sharper it cuts ; sins against patience are of a deeper dye : these are worse than the sins of the devils ; the lapsed angels never sinned against God's patience : how dreadful will their condition be, who therefore sin, because God is patient ? for every crumb of patience, God puts a drop of wrath into his vial ; the longer God forbears a sinner, the more interest he is sure to pay in hell.

9. *Hind.* Mirth and music : Amos. vi. 5. ' That chant to the sound of the viol, and drink wine in bowls ; ' instead of the dirge, the anthem, many sing away sorrow, and drown their tears in wine ; the sweet waters of pleasure destroy the bitter waters of mourning. How many go dancing to hell, like those fish which swim down pleasantly into the dead sea ! let us take heed of all these hindrances of holy tears : ' Let our harp be turned into mourning, and our organ into the voice of them that weep,' Job. xxx. 31.

## CHAP. X.

### *Shewing some Helps to Mourning.*

**H**AVING removed the obstructions, let me in the last place propound some helps to holy mourning.

1. Set David's prospect continually before you. Psal. li. 4. ' My sin is ever before me.' David, that he might be a mourner, kept his eye still upon sin ; see what sin is, and then tell me if there be not enough in it to draw forth tears. I know not what name to give it bad enough ; one calls it the devil's excrement ; sin is a complication of all evil ; it is

the spirits of mischief distilled. 1. Sin dishonours God; it denies God's omniscience, it derides his patience, it distrusts his faithfulness; sin tramples upon God's law, slights his love, grieves his Spirit. 2. Sin wrongs us. 1. Sin shames us: Prov. xiv. 34. 'Sin is a reproach to any people; sin hath made us naked, it hath plucked off our robe, and taken our crown from us; it hath spoiled us of our glory; nay, it hath not only made us naked, but impure, Ezek. xvi. 6, 'I saw thee polluted in thy blood.' Sin hath not only taken off our cloth of gold, but it hath put upon us filthy garments, Zech. iii. 3. God made us 'after his likeness,' Gen. i. 26. but sin hath made us 'like the beasts that perish.' Psal. xlix. ult. We are all become brutish in our affection; nor hath sin made us only like the beasts, but like the devil, John viii. 44. Sin hath drawn the devil's picture upon man's heart. 2. Sin stabs us; the sinner, like the jailor, draws a sword to kill himself; he is bereaved of his judgment, and like the man in the gospel possessed with the devil, 'he cuts himself with stones;' though he hath such a stone in his heart that he feels it not. Every sin is a stroke at the soul; so many sins, so many wounds: every blow given to the tree, helps forward the felling of the tree: Every sin is an hewing and chopping down the soul for hell-fire; if then there be all this evil in sin; if this forbidden fruit hath such a bitter core, it may make us mourn; our hearts should be the spring, and our eyes the rivers.

2. If we would be mourners, let us be orators. Beg a spirit of contrition; pray to God that he will put us in mourning, that he will give us a melting frame of heart; let us beg Achsah's blessing, Josh. xv. 19. 'Springs of water.' Let us pray that our hearts may be spiritual limbeck, dropping tears into God's bottle. Let us pray that we who have the poison of the serpent, may have the tears of the

dove ; the Spirit of God is a spirit of mourning ; let us pray that God would pour that Spirit of grace on us, whereby we may 'look on him whom we have pierced, and mourn for him,' Zech. xii. 10. God must inspire before we can respire ; he must breathe in his Spirit, before we can breathe out our sorrow ; the Spirit of God is like the fire in a still, that sends up the dews of grace in the heart, and causeth them to drop from the eyes. It is this blessed Spirit whose gentle breath causeth our spices to smell, and our waters to flow ; and if the spring of mourning be once set open in the heart, there can want no joy ; as tears flow out, comfort flows in ; which leads to the second part of the text, 'they shall be comforted.'

## CHAP. XI.

*Shewing the comforts belonging to Mourners.*

MATT. v. 4. *They shall be comforted.*

**H**AVING already presented to your view the dark side of the text, I shall now shew you the light side, 'they shall be comforted.'

Where observe, 1. Mourning goes before comfort, as the lancing of a wound precedes the cure ; the Antinomian talks of comfort, but cries down mourning for sin ; he is like a foolish patient, who having a pill prescribed him, licks the sugar, but throws away the pill. The libertine is all for joy and comfort, he licks the sugar, but throws away the bitter pill of repentance ; if ever we have true comfort, we must have it in God's way and method ; sorrow for sin ushers in joy, Isa. lvii. 18. 'I will restore comfort to him and to his mourners.' That is the true sunshine of joy which comes after a shower

of tears ; we may as well expect a crop without seed, as comfort without gospel-mourning.

2. Observe that God keeps his best wine till last ; first, he prescribes mourning for sin, and then sets abroad the wine of consolation ; the devil doth quite contrary ; he shews the best first, and keeps the worst till last : First he shews the wine sparkling in the glass, then comes the ‘ biting of the serpent,’ Prov. xxiii. 32. Satan sets his dainty dishes before men ; he presents sin to them coloured with beauty, sweetened with pleasure, silvered with profit, and then afterwards the sad reckoning is brought in. He shewed Judas first the silver bait, and then struck him with the hook : this is the reason why sin hath so many followers, because it shews the best first, the golden crowns, and then come the lions teeth, Rev. ix. 7, 8.

But God shews the worst first ; first he prescribes a bitter potion, and then brings a cordial, ‘ they shall be comforted.’

3. Observe, gospel-tears are not lost, they are seeds of comfort ; while the penitent doth pour out tears, God pours in joy ; if thou wouldst be cheerful, saith Chrysostom, be sad : Psal. cxxvi. 5. ‘ They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.’ It was the end of Christ’s anointing and coming into the world, that he might comfort them that mourn, Isa. lxi. 3. Christ had the oil of gladness poured on him, as Chrysostom saith, that he might pour it on the mourner ; well then might the apostle call it ‘ a repentance not to be repented of,’ 2 Cor. vii. 10. A man’s drunkenness is to be repented of, his uncleanness is to be repented of ; but his repentance is never to be repented of, because it is the inlet of joy : ‘ Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.’ Here is sweet fruit from a bitter stock : Christ caused the earthen vessels to be filled with water, and then turned the water into wine,



John ii. 9. So when the eye, that earthen vessel, hath been filled with water brim full, then Christ will turn the water of tears into the wine of joy. Holy mourning, saith St. Basil, is the seed out of which the flowers of eternal joy doth grow.

The reason why the mourner shall be comforted, is :

I. Because mourning is made on purpose for this end ; mourning is not prescribed for itself, but that it may lay a train for comfort, therefore we sow in tears that we may reap in joy. Holy mourning is a spiritual medicine ; now a medicine is not prescribed for itself, but for health-sake ; so gospel-mourning is appointed for this very end, to bring forth joy.

2. The spiritual mourner is the fittest person for comfort ; when the heart is broken for sin, now it is fittest for joy ; God pours the golden oil of comfort into broken vessels ; the mourner's heart is emptied of pride, and God fills the empty with his blessing ; the mourner's tears have helped to purge out corruption ; and after purging physic, God gives a julip. The mourner is ready to faint away under the burden of sin, and then the bottle of strong water comes seasonably. The Lord would have the incestuous person (upon his deep humiliation) to be comforted, lest ' he should be swallowed up with over-much sorrow,' 2 Cor. ii. 7.

This is the mourner's privilege, ' He shall be comforted ;' the valley of tears brings the soul into a paradise of joy ; a sinner's joy brings forth sorrow ; the mourner's sorrow brings forth joy. The saints have a wet seed-time, but a joyful harvest. ' They shall be comforted.'

SECT. 1.

*Shewing the mourners' Comforts Here.*

**N**OW to illustrate this, I shall shew you what the comforts are the mourners shall have. These comforts are of a divine infusion, and they are twofold, either Here or Hereafter.

1. *Comforts Here.*] They are called 'the consolations of God, Job xv. 11. that is Great Comforts, such as none but God can give: they exceed all other comforts, as far as heaven doth earth. The root on which these comforts grow, is, The blessed Spirit; he is called the Comforter, John xix. 26. and comfort is said to be a 'fruit of the Spirit,' Gal. v. 22. Christ did purchase peace, the Spirit speaks peace.

*Quest.* How doth the Spirit comfort?

*Ans.* Either mediately or immediately.

1. Mediately; By helping us to apply the promises to ourselves, and draw water out of those wells of salvation; we lie as dead children at the breast, till the Spirit helps us to suck the breast of a promise; and when the Spirit hath taught faith this art, now comfort flows in. Oh how sweet is the breast-milk of a promise!

2. The Spirit comforts immediately: The Spirit by a more direct act, presents God to the soul as reconciled; it 'sheds his love abroad in the heart,' from whence flows infinite joy, Rom. v. 5. The Spirit secretly whispers pardon for sin, and the sight of a pardon dilates the heart with joy, Matt. ix. 2. 'Be of good cheer thy sins are forgiven thee.

That I may speak more fully to this point, I shall shew you the qualifications and excellencies of these comforts which God gives his mourners. 1. These

comforts are real comforts : the Spirit of God cannot witness to that which is untrue. There are many in this age do pretend to comfort, but their comforts are mere impostures ; the body may as well swell with wind as with flesh : a man may as well be swelled with false, as true comforts ; the comforts of the saints are certain, they have the seal of the Spirit set to them, Eph. i. 13. 2 Cor. i. 22. A seal is for confirmation ; when a deed is sealed, it is firm and unquestionable. When a Christian hath the seal of the Spirit stamped upon his heart, now he is confirmed in the love of God.

*Quest.* Wherein do these comforts of the Spirit, which are unquestionably sure, differ from those which are false and pretended.

*Ans.* Three ways. 1. The comforts of God's Spirit are laid in deep conviction, John xvi. 7, 8. ' And when he (that is, the Comforter) is come, he shall reprove the world of sin.'

*Quest.* Why doth conviction go before consolation?

*Ans.* Conviction fits for comfort ; by conviction the Spirit doth sweetly dispose the heart to these two things. 1. To seek after Christ. When once the soul is convinced of sin, and the hell that follows it, now a Saviour is precious. When the Spirit hath shot in the arrow of conviction, now saith a poor soul, where may I meet with Christ? In what ordinance may I come to enjoy Christ? ' saw ye him whom my soul loveth?' all the world for one glimpse of my Saviour. 2. The Spirit by conviction, makes the heart willing to receive Christ upon his own terms : man, by nature, would article and indent with Christ ; he would take half Christ ; he would take him for a Saviour, not a prince ; he would accept of Christ as he hath an ' head of gold,' Cant. v. 11. but not as he hath ' the government upon his shoulders,' Isa. ix. 6. But when God lets loose

the spirit of bondage, and convinceth a sinner of his lost, undone condition, now he is content to have Christ upon any terms. When Paul was struck down to the ground by a spirit of conviction, he cries out, 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?' Acts ix. 6. Let God propound what articles he will, the soul will subscribe to them. Now when a man is brought to Christ's terms, to believe and obey, then he is fit for mercy; when the Spirit of God hath been a spirit of conviction, then it becomes a spirit of consolation; when the plough of the law, hath gone upon the heart, and broken up the fallow ground, now God sows the seed of comfort.

Those who brag of comfort, but were never yet convinced nor broken for sin, have cause to suspect their comfort to be a delusion of Satan. It is like a madman's joy, who fancies himself to be a king, but it may be said 'of his laughter it is mad,' Eccl. ii. 2. The seed which wanted depth of earth withered, Matt. xiii. that comfort which wants depth of earth, deep humiliation and conviction, will soon wither and come to nothing.

2. The Spirit of God is a sanctifying, before a comforting Spirit; as God's Spirit is called the Comforter, so he is called 'a spirit of grace,' Zech. xii. 10. Grace is the work of the Spirit, comfort is the seal of the Spirit; the work of the Spirit goes before the seal; the graces of the Spirit are compared to water, Isa. xlv. 3. and the comforts of the Spirit are compared to oil, Isa. lxi. 1. First, God pours in the water of the Spirit, and then comes the oil of gladness. The oil, in this sense, runs above the water: hereby we shall know whether our comforts are true and genuine. Some talk of the comforting Spirit, who never had the sanctifying Spirit; they boast of assurance, but never had grace; these are spurious joys, these comforts will leave men at death, they will end in horror and despair: God's Spirit will

never set seal to a blank. First, the heart must be an epistle written with the finger of the Holy Ghost, and then it is 'sealed with the Spirit of promise.'

3. The comforts of the Spirit are humbling : Lord, saith the soul, What am I that I should have a smile from heaven, and that thou shouldest give me a privy seal of thy love? The more water is poured into a bucket, the lower it descends; the fuller the ship is laden with sweet spices, the lower it sails; the more a Christian is filled with the sweet comforts of the Spirit, the lower he sails in humility; the fuller a tree is of fruit, the lower the boughs hang; the more full we are of 'the fruits of the Spirit, joy and peace,' Gal. v. 22. the more we bend down in humility. St. Paul, a chosen vessel, filled with the wine of the Spirit, did not more abound in joy, than in lowliness of mind, Eph. iii. 8. 'Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given;' He who was the chief of the apostles, calls himself the least of saints.

Those who say they have comfort, but are proud, they have learned to despise others, and are climbed above ordinances, their comforts are delusions; the devil is able not only to 'transform himself into an angel of light,' 2 Cor. xi. 4. but he can transform himself into the comforter. It is easy to counterfeit money, to silver over brass, and put the king's image upon it : the devil can silver over false comforts, and make them look as if they had the stamp of the King of heaven upon them; the comforts of God are humbling, though they lift the heart up in thankfulness, yet they do not puff it up in pride.

2. The comforts God gives his mourners are un-mixed; they are not tempered with any bitter ingredients : worldly comforts are like wine that runs dregs; there is that guilt within which checks and corrodes; 'in midst of laughter the heart is sad,' Prov. xiv. 13. Queen Mary once said, if she were open-

ed they would find Calais lying at her heart ; if the breast of a sinner were opened and anatomized, you would find a worm gnawing at his heart ; guilt is a wolf which feeds in the breast of his comfort ; a sinner may have a smiling countenance, but a chiding conscience ; his mirth is like the mirth of a man in debt, who is every hour in fear of being arrested ; the comforts of wicked men are spiced with bitterness, they are wormwood wine ; but spiritual comforts are pure, they are not muddled with guilt nor mixed with fear ; they are the pure wine of the Spirit ; what the mourner feels is joy, and nothing but joy.

3. These comforts God gives his mourners are sweet, Eccl. xii. 7. ' Truly the light is sweet ; ' so is the light of God's countenance : how sweet are those comforts which bring the comforter along with them ? John xiv. 16. Therefore the love of God shed into the heart, is said to be better than wine, Cant. i. 2. Wine pleaseth the palate, but the love of God cheers the conscience ; the lips of Christ ' drop sweet smelling myrrh.' Cant. v. 13. The comforts God gives are a Christian's music, they are the golden pot and the manna ; the nectar and ambrosia of a Christian ; they are the saints' festival, their banqueting stuff ; so sweet are these divine comforts, that the church had her fainting fits for want of them, Cant. ii. 5. ' stay me with flagons.' [The flagons are put for the wine ; by these flagons are meant the comforts of the Spirit ; the Hebrew is, all variety of delights ; to shew the abundance of delectability and sweetness in these comforts of the Spirit ; ' Comfort me with apples.'] Apples are sweet in taste, fragrant in smell ; so, sweet and delicious are those apples which grow upon the tree in paradise. These comforts from above are so sweet, that they make all other comforts sweet ; health, estate, relations ; they are like sauce which

makes all our earthly possessions and enjoyments come off with a better relish. So sweet are these comforts of the Spirit, that they do much abate and moderate our joy in worldly things; he who hath been drinking spirits of wine, or alkermes, will not much thirst after water; and that man who hath once 'tasted how sweet the Lord is,' Psal. xxxiv. 8. and hath drank the cordials of the Spirit, will not thirst immoderately after secular delights. Those who play with dogs and birds, it is a sign they have no children; such as are inordinate in their desire and love of the creature, declare plainly that they never had better comforts.

4. These comforts which God gives his mourners are holy comforts; they are called 'the comforts of the Holy Ghost,' Acts ix. 31. Every thing propagates in its own kind; the Holy Ghost can no more produce impure joys in the soul, than the sun can produce darkness; he who hath the comforts of the Spirit, looks upon himself as a person engaged to do God more service: Hath the Lord looked upon me with a smiling face? I can never pray enough, I can never love God enough. The comforts of the Spirit raise in the heart an holy antipathy against sin; the dove hates every feather that hath grown upon the hawk: so there is an hatred of every motion and temptation to evil? he who hath a principle of life in him, opposeth every thing that would destroy life, he hates poison; so he that hath the comforts of the Spirit living in him, sets himself against those sins which would murder his comforts; divine comforts give the soul more acquaintance with God, 1 John i. 4. 'Our fellowship is with the Father and his Son Jesus.'

5. The comforts reserved for the mourners are filling comforts, Rom. xv. 13. 'The God of hope fill you with joy,' John xvi. 24. 'Ask that your joy may be full.' When God pours in the joys of

heaven they fill the heart, and make it run over, 2 Cor. vii. 4. 'I am exceeding joyful;' the Greek is, I overflow with joy, as a cup that is filled with wine till it runs over. Outward comforts can no more fill the heart than a triangle can fill a circle. Spiritual joys are satisfying, Psal. lxiii. 5. 'My heart shall be satisfied as with marrow, and I will praise thee with joyful lips.' David's heart was full; and the joy did break out at his lips, Psal. iv. 7. 'Thou hast put gladness in my heart;' worldly joys do put gladness into the face, 2 Cor. v. 12. they rejoice in the face; but the Spirit of God puts gladness into the heart; divine joys are heart joys, Zech. x. 7. John xvi. 22. 'Your heart shall rejoice.' Luke i. 47. 'My spirit rejoiceth in God.' And to shew how filling these comforts are, which are of an heavenly extraction, the Psalmist says they create greater joy than when 'wine and oil increase,' Psal. iv. Wine and oil may delight, but not satisfy; they have their vacuity and indigence; we may say, as Zech. x. 2. 'they comfort in vain;' outward comforts do sooner cloy than cheer, and sooner weary than fill. Xerxes offered great rewards to him that could find out a new pleasure; but the comforts of the Spirit are satisfactory, they recruit the heart, Ps. xciv. 19. 'Thy comforts delight my soul.' There is as much difference between heavenly comforts and earthly, as between a banquet that is eaten, and one that is painted on the wall.

6. The comforts God gives his mourners in this life, are glorious comforts, 1 Pet i. 8. 'Joy full of glory.' 1. They are glorious, because they are a prelibation and foretaste of that joy which we shall have in a glorified estate. These comforts are an handsel and earnest of glory, they put us in heaven before our time, Eph. i. 13. 14. 'Ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit, which is an earnest of the inheritance;' the earnest is part of the sum behind;



so the comforts of the Spirit are the earnest, the 'cluster of grapes at Eshcol,' Numb. xiii. 24. the first-fruits of the heavenly Canaan. 2. The joys of the Spirit are glorious, in opposition to other joys, which, compared with these, are inglorious and vile. A carnal man's joy, as it is airy and flashy, so it is sordid, he sucks nothing but dregs, Amos vi. 13. 'Ye rejoice in a thing of nought.' A carnal spirit rejoiceth, because he can say this house is his, this estate is his; but a gracious Spirit rejoiceth because he can say this God is his, Psal. xlviii. 14. 'For this God is our God for ever and ever.' The ground of a Christian's joy is glorious, he rejoiceth in that he is an heir of the promise: the joy of a godly man is made up of that which is the angels' joy, he triumphs in the light of God's countenance; his joy is that which is Christ's own joy; he rejoiceth in the mystical union which is begun here, and consummate in heaven: Thus the joy of the saints is a joy full of glory.

7. The comforts which God gives his mourners are infinitely transporting and ravishing; so delightful are they and amazing, that they cause a jubilation; which as some of the learned speak, is so great, that it cannot be expressed; of all things joy is the most hard to be decyphered; it is called joy unspeakable, 1 Pet. i. 8. You may sooner taste honey, than tell how sweet it is; the most pathetic words can no more set forth the comforts of the Spirit, than the most curious pencil can draw the life and breath of a man; the angels cannot express the joys they feel; some have been so overwhelmed with the sweet raptures of joy, that they have not been able to contain, but as Moses, have died with a kiss from God's mouth. Thus have we seen the glass oft breaking with the strength of the liquor put into it.

8. These comforts of the Spirit are powerful,

they are strong cordials, so the apostle phraseth it, strong consolation. Divine comfort, 1. Strengthens for duty, Neh. viii. 10. 'The joy of the Lord is your strength.' Joy whets and sharpens industry; a man that is steeled and animated with the comforts of God's Spirit, goes with vigour and alacrity through the exercises of religion; he believes firmly, he loves fervently, he is carried full sail in duty; 'the joy of the Lord is his strength.' 2. Divine comfort supports under affliction. 1 Thess. i. 6. 'Having received the word in much affliction,' with joy. The wine of the Spirit can sweeten the waters of Marah: they who are possessed of these heavenly comforts, can gather grapes of thorns, and fetch honey out of the lion's carcass: they are strong consolations indeed, that can stand out against the fiery trial, and turn the flame into a bed of roses. How powerful is that comfort, which can make a Christian glory in tribulation? Rom. v. 3. A believer is never so sad, but he can rejoice; the bird of paradise can sing in winter, 2 Cor. vi. 10. 'As sorrowing, yet always rejoicing.' Let sickness come, the sense of pardon takes away the sense of pain. The inhabitant shall not say I am sick,' Isa. xxxiii. 24. Let death come, a Christian is above it; 'O death where is thy sting?' 1 Cor. xv. 55. At the end of the rod a Christian tastes honey; these are strong consolations.

9. The comforts God's mourners have are heart-quieting comforts; they cause a sweet acquiescence and rest in the soul. The heart of a Christian is in a kind of ataxy and discomposure, like the needle in the compass, it shakes and trembles till the Comforter comes. Some creatures cannot live but in the sun; a Christian is even dead in the nest, unless he may have the sun-light of God's countenance, Psal. cxliii. 7, 'Hide not thy face from me, lest I be like them that go down into the pit.' Nothing

but the breast will quiet the child ; it is only the breast of consolation quiets the believer.

10. The comforts of the Spirit are abiding comforts ; as they abound in us, so they abide with us, John xiv. 16. ' He shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever.' Worldly comforts are still upon the wing, ready to fly ; they are like a land-flood, or a flash of lightning ; but the comforts with which God feeds his mourners are immortal, 2 Thess. ii. 16. ' Who hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation.' Though a Christian hath not always a full beam of comfort, yet he hath a dawning of it in his soul ; he hath still a ground of hope and a root of joy ; there is that within him which bears up his heart, and which he would not on any terms part with.

*Use.* Behold the mourners privilege, ' he shall be comforted.' David, who was the great mourner of Israel, was the sweet singer of Israel. The weeping dove shall be covered with the golden feathers of comfort ; O how rare and superlative are these comforts !

*Quest.* But may not God's mourners want these comforts ?

*Ans.* Spiritual Mourners have a title to these comforts, yet they may sometimes want them. God is a free Agent, he will have the timing of our comforts ; he hath a self-freedom to do what he will. The holy one of Israel will not be limited, he will reserve his Prerogative to give or suspend comfort, and if we are a while without comfort, we must not quarrel with his dispensations ; for as the mariner is not to wrangle with providence, because the wind blows out of the east, when he desires it to blow out of the west ; nor is the husbandman to murmur, when God stops the bottles of heaven in time of drought : so neither is any man to dispute or quarrel with God, when he stops the sweet influence of com-

fort, but ought rather to acquiesce in his sacred will.

But though the Lord might, by virtue of his sovereignty withhold comfort from the mourner, yet there may be many pregnant causes assigned, why mourners want comfort.

1. In regard of God. 2. In regard of themselves.

1. In regard of God: He sees it fit to withhold comfort, 1. That he may raise the value of grace; we are apt to esteem comfort above grace; therefore God locks up our comforts for a time that he may enhance the price of grace; when farthings go better than gold, the king will call in farthings that the price of gold may be the more raised. 2. God would have his people learn to serve him for himself, and not for comfort only; it is an harlot love, to love the husband's money and tokens more than his person; such as serve God only for comfort, do not so much serve God, as serve themselves of him.

2. That God's mourners want comfort, it is most frequently in regard of themselves.

1. Through mistake, which is two-fold. 1. They go not to the right spring for comfort; they go to their tears, when they should go to Christ's blood; it is a kind of idolatry to make our tears the ground of comfort; mourning is not meritorious; it is the way to joy, not the cause. Jacob got the blessing in the garments of his elder brother; true comfort flows out of Christ's sides; our tears are stained, till they are washed in the blood of Christ, John xvi. ult. 'In me peace.' 2. Mistake is, that mourners are privileged persons, and may take more liberty, they may slacken the strings of duty, and let loose the reins of sin: Christ hath indeed purchased a liberty for his people, but an holy liberty; not a liberty for sin, but from sin; 1 Pet. ii. 16. 'Ye are a royal priesthood, a peculiar people;' ye

are not in a state of slavery, but royalty : what follows ? do not make Christian liberty a cloak for sin. ' As free, and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness.' If we quench the sanctifying Spirit, God will quench the comforting Spirit ; sin is compared to a cloud, Isa. xlv. 22. This cloud intercepts the light of God's countenance.

2. God's mourners sometimes want comfort through discontent and peevishness. David makes his disquiet the cause of his sadness, Psal. xliii. 5. ' Why art thou cast down O my soul ? why art thou disquieted within me ?' a disquieted heart, like a rough sea, is not easily calmed ; it is hard to make a troubled spirit receive comfort ; this disquiet ariseth from various causes ; sometimes from outward sorrow and melancholy ; sometimes from a kind of envy ; God's people are troubled to see others have comfort, and they want it ; and now in a pet they refuse comfort, and like a froward child, put away the breast, Psal. lxxvii. 2. ' My soul refused to be comforted.' Indeed a disquieted spirit is no more fit for comfort, than a distracted man is fit for counsel ; and whence is the mourner's discontent, but pride ? as if God had not dealt well with him in stopping the influences of comfort ; O Christian, thy spirit must be more humbled and broken before God empty out his golden oil of joy.

3. The mourner is without comfort, for want of applying the promises ; he looks at that sin which may humble him, but not at that word which may comfort him. The mourner's eyes are so full of tears that he cannot see the promise ; the virtue and comfort of a medicine is in the applying ; when the promises are applied by faith, they bring comfort, Hos. ii. 19. Isa. xlix. 15, 16. Faith milks the breast of a promise. That Satan may hinder us of comfort it is his policy, either to keep the promise from us, that we may not know it, or to keep us from the

promise that we may not apply it. Never a promise in the Bible, but belongs to the mourner, had he but the skill and dexterity of faith to lay hold on it.

4. The mourner may want comfort, through too much earthly-mindedness; by feeding immoderately on earthly comforts, we miss of heavenly comforts, Isa. lvii. 17. 'For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth, and I hid me.' The earth puts out the fire; earthliness extinguisheth the flame of divine joy in the soul; an eclipse is *per interpositionem corporis Lunaris*, when the moon, which is a dense body, comes between: the moon is an emblem of the world: Rev. xii. 1. when this comes between, then there is an eclipse in the light of God's face; such as dig in mines, say there is such a damp comes from the earth as puts out the light of a candle; earthly comforts send forth such a damp as puts out the light of spiritual joy.

5. Perhaps the mourner hath had comfort, and lost it: Adam's rib was taken from him when he was asleep, Gen. ii. 21. Our comforts are taken away when we fall asleep in security; the spouse lost her beloved when she lay upon the bed of sloth. Cant. v. 2, 6.

For these reasons God's mourners may want comfort; but that the spiritual mourner may not be too much dejected, I shall reach forth 'the cup of consolation,' Jer. xvi. 7. and speak a few words that may comfort the mourner in the want of comfort. 1. Jesus Christ was without comfort, therefore no wonder if we are; our comforts are not better than his; he who was the Son of God's love, was without the sense of God's love. 2. The mourner hath a seed of comfort; Psal. xcvi. 11. 'Light is sown for the righteous.' Light is a metaphor put for comfort and it is sown: Though a child of God hath not comfort always in the flower, yet he hath in the seed; though he doth not feel comfort

from God, yet he takes comfort in God. 3. A Christian may be high in grace, and low in comfort; the high mountains are without flowers; the mines of gold have little or no corn growing on them; a Christian's heart may be a rich mine of grace though it be barren of comfort. 4. The mourner is heir to comfort; and though 'for a small moment' God may forsake his people, Isa. liv. 7. yet there is a time shortly coming, when the mourner shall have all tears wiped away, and shall be brimful of comfort; this joy is reserved for heaven, and this brings me to the second particular.

## SECT. 2.

### *Shewing the Mourners' Comforts Hereafter.*

2. *Comforts Hereafter.* 'They shall be comforted.' Though in this life some interviews and love-tokens pass between God and the mourner, yet the great comforts are kept in reversion; 'in God's presence is fulness of joy;' there is a time coming (the day star is ready to appear) when the saints shall bathe themselves in the river of life; when they shall never see a wrinkle on God's brow more; but his face shall shine, his lips drop honey, his arms sweetly embrace them. The saints shall have a spring-tide of joy, and it shall never be low water; the saints shall at that day put off their mourning, and exchange their sables for white robes: then shall the winter be past, the rain of tears be over and gone, Cant. ii. 11, 12. the flowers of joy shall appear; and, after the weeping of the dove, the time of the singing of birds shall come. This is the great consolation, the jubilee of the blessed which shall never expire; in this life the people of God taste of joy, but in heaven the full vessels shall be

broached : there is a river in the midst of the heavenly paradise, which hath a fountain to feed it, Ps. xxxvi. 8, 9.

The times we are cast into, being for the present sad and cloudy, it will not be amiss for the reviving the hearts of God's people, to speak a little of these comforts which God reserves in heaven for his mourners, [They shall be comforted.] The greatness of these celestial comforts is most fitly in scripture expressed by the joy of a feast ; mourning shall be turned into feasting ; and it shall be a marriage-feast, which is usually kept with the greatest solemnity, Rev. xix. 9. 'Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage-supper of the Lamb.' Bullinger and Gregory the great, do understand this supper of the Lamb, to be meant of the saint's supping with Christ in heaven ; men after hard labour go to supper ; so, when the saints shall 'rest from their labours,' they shall sup with Christ in glory : now to speak something of the last great supper.

It will be a great supper, 1. In regard of the Founder of this feast, God ; it is the supper of a King, therefore sumptuous and magnificent, Psal. xcv. 3. 'The Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods.' Where should there be state and magnificence but in a king's court ? 2. It will be a great supper in regard of the cheer and provision ; this exceeds all hyperboles. What blessed fruit doth the tree of life in paradise yield ! Rev. ii. 7. Christ will lead his spouse into the banquetting-house, and feast her with those rare viands, and cause her to drink that spiced wine, that heavenly nectar and ambrosia wherewith the angelical powers are infinitely refreshed.

First, Every dish served in at this heavenly supper shall be sweet to our palate ; there is no dish here we do not love ; Christ will make such savoury meat as he is sure his spouse loves.



**Secondly, There shall be no want, there is no want at a feast; the various fulness in Christ will prevent a scarcity; and it will be a fulness without surfeit, because a fresh course will continually be served in.**

**Thirdly, they who eat of this supper shall 'never hunger more;' hunger is a sharp sauce; the Lamb's supper shall not only satisfy hunger, but prevent it, Rev. vii. 16. 'They shall hunger no more!'**

**3. It will be a great supper in regard of the company invited. Company adds to a feast, and is of itself sauce to sharpen and provoke the appetite. Saints, angels, archangels will be at this supper; nay, Christ himself will be both Founder and Guest; the scripture calls it an innumerable company,' &c. Heb. xii. and that which makes the society sweeter, is, that there shall be perfect love at this feast. The motto shall be, "one heart, and one way," all the guests shall be linked together with the golden chain of charity.**

**4. It will be a great supper in regard of the holy mirth, Eccl. 10. 19. 'A feast is made for mirth;' at this supper there shall be joy, and nothing but joy, Psal. xvi. ult. There is no weeping at a feast. O what triumph and acclamations will there be? there are two things at this supper of the Lamb will create joy and mirth. 1. When the saints shall think with themselves that they are kept from a worse supper. The devils have a supper, such an one as it is, a black banquet; there are two dishes served in, 'weeping and gnashing of teeth;' every bit they eat makes their hearts ache; who would envy them their dinner here, who must have such a supper? 2. It will be matter of joy at the supper of the Lamb, that the Master of the feast bids all his guests welcome; the saints shall have the smiles of God's face, the kisses of his lips; he will lead them into the wine-cellar, and display the ban-**

ner of love over them. The saints shall be as full of solace as sanctity. What is a feast without mirth? worldly mirth is flashy and empty, this shall be infinitely delightful and ravishing.

5. It will be a great supper for the music. This will be a marriage-supper, and what better music than the Bridegroom's voice, saying, my spouse, my undefiled, 'Take thy fill of love;' there will be the angels' anthems, the saints' triumphs; the angels, those trumpeters of heaven, shall sound forth the excellencies of Jehovah; and the saints, those noble quiristers, shall take down their harps from the willows and join in concert with the angels, praising and blessing God, Rev. xv. 2, 3. 'I saw them that had gotten the victory over the beast, having the harps of God, and they sung the song of Moses, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty, just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints;' &c. O the sweet harmony at this feast, it shall be music without discord.

6. This supper is great in regard of the place where it shall be celebrated, in the Paradise of God, Rev. ii. 7. It is a stately palace; stately, 1. For its situation; it is of a very great height, Rev. xxi. 8. 2. For its prospect; all sparkling beauties are there centred; and the delight of the prospect is propriety; that is the best prospect where a man sees farthest on his own ground. 3. For its amplitude; this royal feast shall be kept in a most spacious room, a room infinitely greater than the whole firmament, one star whereof, if we may believe astronomers, is bigger than the whole earth; tho' there be such a multitude as no man can number, 'of all nations, kindreds, people, and tongues.' Rev. vii. 9. yet the table is long enough, and the room spacious enough for all the guests. Aulus Gellius, in

his 13th book, makes this to be one of those four things which are requisite to a feast, a fit place. The empyrean heaven bespangled with light, arrayed with rich hangings, embroidered with glory, seated above all the visible orbs, is the place of the marriage-supper; this doth infinitely transcend the most profound search; I am no more able to express it, than I can span the firmament, or weigh the earth in a pair of balances.

7. It will be a great supper in regard of the continuance, it hath no end. Epicures have a short feast and a long reckoning; but those who shall sit down at the heavenly banquet, shall not rise from the table; the cloth shall never be taken away, but they shall be always feeding upon those sweet junkets and delicacies which are set before them: We read king Ahasuerus made a feast for his princes that lasted 'an hundred and fourscore days,' Esth. i. 4. but this blessed feast reserved for the saints, is for ever, Psal. xvi. 11. 'At thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.'

*Use. Consolation.* How may this be as Bezoar stone to keep the hearts of God's people from fainting! 'They shall be comforted;' they shall sit with Christ upon the throne, Rev. iii. 21. and sit down with him at the table. Who would not mourn for sin, that are sure to meet with such rewards! 'They shall be comforted.' The marriage-supper will make amends for the valley of tears: 'O thou saint of God, who art now watering thy plants, and weeping bitterly for sin, at this last and great feast thy 'water shall be turned into wine;' thou who now mortifiest thy corruption, and beatest down thy body by prayer and fasting, shalt shortly sup with Christ and angels; thou who didst refuse to touch the forbidden tree, shalt feed upon 'the tree of life in the paradise of God.' Thou impoverished saint,

who hast scarce a bit of bread to eat, remember for thy comfort, 'in thy Father's house there is bread enough;' and he is making ready a feast for thee, where all the dainties of heaven are served in; O feed with delight upon the thoughts of this marriage-supper; after thy funeral begins thy festival; long for suppertime.

Christ hath paid for this supper upon the cross, there is no fear of reckoning to be brought in; 'wherefore comfort one another with these words.'

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MATT. v. 5. *Blessed are the Meek, for they shall inherit the Earth.*

## CHAP. XII.

### *Concerning Christian Meekness.*

**WE** are now got to the third step leading in the way to blessedness, Christian Meekness, 'blessed are the meek.' See how the Spirit of God adorns, 'the hidden man of the heart' with multiplicity of graces! the workmanship of the Holy Ghost is not only curious, but various; it makes the heart meek, pure, peaceable, &c. The graces therefore are compared to needle-work, which is different and various in it flowers and colours. In the words there is a duty, meekness; and that duty like the dove, brings an olive-leaf in the mouth of it, 'they shall inherit the earth.'

*Doct.* The proposition I shall insist on is, that meek persons are blessed persons. For the right understanding of this, we must know there is a two-fold meekness.

1. Meekness towards God. 2. Meekness towards man.

**1. Meekness towards God which implies two things.**

**1. Submission to his will. 2. Flexibleness to his word.**

**1. Submission to God's will ; when we carry ourselves calmly without swelling or murmuring under the dispensations of Providence, 1 Sam. iii. 18. ' It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good.' The meek-spirited Christian saith thus, Let God do what he will with me, let him carve out what condition he pleases, I will submit : God sees what is best for me, whether a fertile soil or a barren ; let him chequer his work as he pleases, it sufficeth God hath done it ; it was an unmeek spirit in the prophet to struggle with God, Jonah. iv. 9. ' I do well to be angry to the death.'**

**2. Flexibleness to God's word : When we are willing to let the word bear sway in our souls, and become pliable to all its laws and maxims ; he is spiritually meek who conforms himself to the mind of God, and doth not quarrel with the instructions of the word, but the corruptions of his heart. Cornelius's speech to Peter did savour of a meek spirit, Acts x. 23. ' Now therefore we are all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.' How happy is it when the word, which comes with majesty, is received with meekness ! James i. 21.**

**2. Meekness towards man ; this Basil the great calls the indelible character of a gracious soul ; ' Blessed are the meek.' To illustrate this I shall shew what this meekness is. Meekness is a grace whereby we are enabled by the Spirit of God to moderate our passion. 1. It is a grace. The philosopher calls it a virtue ; but the apostle calls it a grace, therefore reckons it among the ' fruits of the Spirit,' Gal. v. 23. it is of a divine extract and original. 2. By it we are enabled to moderate our pas-**

sion.] By nature the heart is like a troubled sea, casting forth the foam of anger and wrath: now meekness doth calm the passions; it sits as moderator in the soul, quieting and giving check to its distempered motions: as the moon doth serve to temper and allay the heat of the sun, so christian meekness doth allay the heat of passion; meekness of spirit doth not only fit us for communion with God, but civil converse with men. Meekness hath a divine beauty and sweetness in it; it credits religion; it wins upon all; this meekness consists in three things.

1. Bearing of injuries. 2. Forgiving of injuries.
3. Recompensing good for evil.

1. Meekness consists in bearing of injuries; I may say of this grace, it is not easily provoked; a meek spirit, like wet tinder, will not easily take fire, Psal. xxxviii. 12, 13. 'They that seek my hurt speak mischievous things, but I as a deaf man heard not.' Meekness is the bridle of anger; the passions are fiery and headstrong, meekness gives check to them; meekness bridles the mouth, it ties the tongue to its good behaviour; meekness observes that motto, "bear and forbear." There are four things opposite to meekness.

1. Meekness is opposed to hastiness of spirit, Eccl. vii. 9. 'Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry, for anger resteth in the bosom of fools.' When the heart boils in passion, and anger (as Seneca saith) sparkles forth in the eye, this is far from meekness; 'anger rests in the bosom of fools.' Anger may be in a wise man, but it rests in a fool. The angry man is like flax, or gun-powder, no sooner do you touch him than he is all on fire. Saint Basil calls anger drunkenness; and Hierom saith there are more drunk with passion than with wine. Seneca calls anger a short fit of madness; sometimes it suspends the use of reason; in the best things we are cool

enough; in religion we are all ice, in contention all fire. How unseemingly rash anger, how doth it disguise and disfigure; Homer saith of Agamemnon that when he did moderate his passion, he resembled the gods, he was like Jupiter in feature, like Pallas in wisdom; but when he was in his fury, he was like a very Tyger, nothing of Jupiter did appear in him; as Plato counselled the great revelers and drinkers of his time, that they should view themselves in a glass when they were in their drunken humours, and they would appear loathsome to themselves: so let a man disguised with passion view himself in the glass, and sure he would ever after be out of love with himself, Eph. iv. 26, 27. 'Let not the sun go down upon your wrath, neither give place to the devil;' oh, saith one, he hath wronged me, and I will never give place to him; but better to give place to him than the devil: an hasty spirit is not a meek spirit. *Caution.* Not but that we may in some cases be angry. There is an holy anger; that anger is without sin, which is against sin; meekness and zeal may stand together; in matters of religion a Christian must be clothed with the spirit of Elijah, and be 'full of the fury of the Lord,' Jer. vi. 11. Christ was meek, Matt. xi. 29. yet zealous, John ii. 14, 15. The zeal of God's house did eat him up.

2. Meekness is opposed to malice; malice is the devil's picture, John viii. 44. Malice is mental murder: 1 John iii. 15. it unfits for duty. How can such a man pray? I have read of two men that lived in malice, who being asked how they could say the Lord's prayer? one answered, he thanked God there were many good prayers besides: The other answered, when he said the Lord's prayer, he did leave out these words, 'as we forgive them that trespass against us:' but saint Austin brings in God replying, Because thou dost not say my prayer,

therefore I will not hear thine. Were it not a sad judgment, if all that a man did eat should turn to poison! to a malicious man all the holy ordinances of God turn to poison; the table of the Lord is a snare, 'he eats and drinks his own damnation;' a malicious spirit is not a meek spirit.

8. Meekness is opposed to revenge; malice is the scum of anger, and revenge is malice boiling over; malice is a vermin, lives on blood; revenge is Satan's nectar and ambrosia; this is the savoury meat which the malicious man dresseth for the devil; the scripture forbids revenge, Rom. xii. 19. 'Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves:' this is to take God's office out of his hand, who is called the 'God of recompences,' Jer. li. 56. and the 'God of vengeance,' Psal. xciv. 1. This I urge against those who challenge one another to duels; indeed spiritual duels are lawful; it is good to fight with the devil, James iv. 7. 'resist the devil:' it is good to duel with a man's self, the regenerate part against the carnal: blessed is he that seeks a revenge upon his lusts, 2 Cor. vii. 11. 'Yea what revenge?' but other duels are unlawful; 'Avenge not yourselves.' The Turks, though a barbarous people, did in ancient times burn such as went to duel, in their sides, with hot coals of fire; they who were in heat of revenge were punished suitably with fire.

*Obj.* But if I am thus meek and tame, in bearing of injuries and incivilities, I shall lose my credit, it will be a stain to my reputation?

*Ans.* 1. To pass by an injury without revenge, is no eclipse to a man's credit. Solomon tells us it is the glory of a man to pass over a transgression, Prov. xii. 11. it is more honour to bury an injury, than revenge it; and to slight it, than to write it down. The weakest creatures soonest turn head, and sting upon every touch; the lion, a more majestic creature, is not easily provoked; the bram-



ble tears, the oak and cedar are more peaceable : passion imports weakness ; a noble spirit overlooks an injury.

*Ans. 2.* Suppose a man's credit should suffer an impair with those whose censure is not to be valued ; yet think, which is worse, shame or sin ? wilt thou sin against God to save thy credit ? surely it is little wisdom for a man to adventure his blood, that he may fetch back his reputation, and to run into hell to be counted valorous.

*Caution.* Not but that a man may stand up in defence of himself when his life is endangered. Some of the anabaptists hold it unlawful to take up the sword upon any occasion, though when they get the power, I would be loath to trust them, their river-water often turning to blood, but questionless a man may take up the sword for self-preservation, else he comes under the breach of the sixth commandment, he is guilty of self-murder ; in taking up the sword he doth not so much seek another's death as the safe-guard of his own life ; his intention is not to do hurt, but prevent it ; self-defence is consistent with christian meekness ; the law of nature and religion justify it ; that God who bids us put up our sword, Matt. xxvi. 51. yet will allow us a buckler in our own defence ; and he that will have us innocent as doves, not to offend others, will have us wise as serpents in preserving ourselves.

*Caution 2.* Though revenge be contrary to meekness, yet not but that a magistrate may revenge the quarrel of others ; indeed it is not revenge in him ; but justice : the magistrate is God's lieutenant on earth ; God hath put the sword in his hand ; and he is not ' to bear the sword in vain ; ' he must be *in terrorem*, ' for the punishment of evil doers ', 1 Pet. ii. 14. Tho' a private person must not render to any man evil for evil, Rom. xii. 17. yet a magistrate may ; the evil of punishment for the evil of offence :

this rendering of evil is good. Private men must put their sword into the sheath, but the magistrate sins if he doth not draw it out : as his sword must not surfeit through cruelty, so neither must it rust thro' partiality : too much lenity in a magistrate is not meekness, but injustice ; for him to indulge offences, and say with a gentle reproof as Eli, 1 Sam. ii. 23, 24. ' Why do you such things ? nay, my sons, for it is no good report that I hear.' This is but to shave the head that deserves to be cut off ; such a magistrate makes himself guilty.

4. Meekness is opposed to evil-speaking, Eph. iv. 31. ' Let all evil-speaking be put away.' Our words should be mild, like the waters of Siloah, which run softly ; it is too usual for passionate spirits to break into opprobrious language ; the tongues of many are fired, and it is the devil lights the match ; therefore they are said in scripture to be ' set on fire of hell,' James iii. 6. Men have learned of the old serpent, to spit their venom one at another in disgraceful revilings, Matt. v. 22. ' who-soever shall say thou fool, shall be in danger of hell-fire.' Under that word fool, all vilifying terms are by our Saviour forbidden ; let us take heed of this, it is hateful to God : God is not in this fire, but in the still small voice, 1 Kings xix. 12.

*Obj.* But did not the apostle Paul call the Galatians fools.

*Ans.* Paul had an infallible spirit, which we have not ; besides, when Paul uttered those words, it was not by way of reproach, but reproof ; it was not to defame the Galatians, but to reclaim them ; not to vilify them, but to humble them. Saint Paul was grieved to see them so soon fall into a relapse ; well might he say foolish Galatians in an holy zeal ; because they had suffered so much in the cause of religion, and now made a defection, and fell off, ver. 4. ' Have ye suffered so many things in vain ?' but

though Saint Paul, guided by the Spirit of God, did give this epithet to the Galatians, it is no warrant for us, when any have wronged us, to use disgraceful terms. Meekness doth not vent itself in scurrility; it doth not retaliate by railing, Jude ix. 'Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil, he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.' Some understand by Michael, Christ: but more truly, it is meant of one of the chief of the angels. The contest or dispute between the archangel and the devil, was about the body of Moses. Some divines, say, that when God did dispose of Moses' body, he employed the archangel to inter him so secretly, that his burying place might not be known. It is likely, if his dead body had been found, the Israelites might have been ready, in a preposterous zeal, to have adored it. The devil opposeth the archangel, and contends about the dead body; but the archangel durst not (some read it could not endure to) bring a railing accusation; it seems the devil provoked him with evil language, and would fain have extorted passion from him, but the archangel was mild, and said only, 'The Lord rebuke thee;' the angel would not so much as rail against the devil: ye may learn meekness of the archangel, 1 Pet. iii. 9. 'Not rendering railing for railing.'

*Caution.* Not but that a Christian ought prudentially to clear himself from slanders. When the apostle Paul was charged with being mad, he vindicates himself, Acts xxvi. 25. 'I am not mad, most noble Festus.' Though a Christian's retorts must not be vulnerating, they may be vindicating. Though he may not scandalize another, yet he may apologize for himself. There must be christian prudence, as well as christian meekness; it is not mildness but weakness, to part with our integrity, Job xxvii. 6. To be

silent when we are slanderously traduced, is to make ourselves appear guilty. We must so affect meekness, as not to lose the honour of innocence; it is lawful to be our own compurgators; the fault lies only in this, when we retort injuries with reproachful terms, which is to pay a man back in the devil's coin.

The second branch of meekness is in the forgiving of injuries, Mark xi. 25. 'And when ye stand praying, forgive;' as if Christ had said, It is to little purpose to pray, unless you forgive; a meek spirit is a forgiving spirit: this is an Herculean work; nothing doth more cross the stream of corrupt nature; men forget kindnesses, but remember injuries. I once heard of a woman that lived in malice, and being requested by some of her neighbours, when she lay on her death-bed, to forgive, she answered, "I cannot forgive though I go to hell;" this is cutting against the grain; some can rather sacrifice their lives than their lusts; but forgive we must, and forgive as God forgives.

1. *Really*, God doth not make a show of forgiveness, and keep our sins by him, he blots out our debts, Isa. xliii. 25. God passeth an act of oblivion, Jer. xxxi. 34. he forgives, and forgets. So the meek spirit doth not only make a show of forgiving his neighbour, but he doth it from the heart, Mat. xviii. 35.

2. *Fully*. God forgives all our sins; he doth not for fourscore write down fifty, but he gives a general release, Psal. ciii. 3. 'Who forgiveth all thy iniquities.' Thus a meek-spirited Christian forgives all injuries; false hearts pass by some offences, but retain others, this is but half-forgiving; is this meekness? wouldst thou have God deal so with thee? wouldst thou have him forgive thee 'thy trespasses as thou forgivest others?'

3. God forgives often; we are often peccant,

we run every day afresh upon the score, but God often forgives; therefore he is said to multiply to pardon, Isa. lv. 6. So a meek spirit doth reiterate, and send one pardon after another; Peter asks the question, Mat. xviii. 21, 'Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him, till seven times?' Christ answers him, ver. 22. 'I say not unto thee until seven times, but until seventy times seven.'

*Obj.* 1. Such an affront hath been offered, that flesh and blood cannot put up?

*Ans.* 'Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God?' 1 Cor. xv. 50. Christians must walk antipodes to themselves; and with the sword of the Spirit fight against the lusts of the flesh,' Gal. v. 24.

*Obj.* 2. But if I forgive one injury, I shall invite more.

*Ans.* 1. It argues a devilish nature to be worse for kindness; but suppose we should meet with such monsters, yet it is our duty to be ready to forgive, Col. iii. 13. Shall we cease from doing good, because others will not cease from being evil?

2. I answer, If the more thou forgivest injuries, the more injuries thou meetest with, this will make thy grace shine the more; another's vice will be a greater demonstration of thy virtue; often forgiving will add the more to the weight of his sin, and the weight of thy glory. If any shall say to me, I strive to excel in other graces; but as for this grace of meekness, bearing, and forgiving of injuries, I cannot arrive at it, I desire in this to be excused; what dost thou talk of other graces? where there is one grace, there is all; if meekness be wanting, it is but a counterfeit chain of grace; thy faith is a fable, thy repentance is a lie, thy humility is hypocrisy.

And whereas thou sayest thou canst not forgive, think of, 1. Thy sin; thy neighbour is not so bad

in offending thee, as thou art in not forgiving him; thy neighbour in offending thee, doth but trespass against a man; but thou refusing to forgive him, dost trespass against God. 2. Thy danger; thou who art implacable, and though thou mayest smother the fire of thy rage, yet wilt not extinguish it; know, that if thou diest this night, thou diest in an unpardoned condition; if you will not believe me, believe Christ, Mark xi. 26. 'If you do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.' He who lives without meekness, dies without mercy.

3. *Branch* of meekness is in 'recompensing good for evil;' this is an higher degree than the other Matt. v. 44. 'Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, pray for them that despitefully use you,' Rom. xii. 20. 'If thine enemy hunger, feed him,' 1 Pet. 3. 9. 'Not rendering evil for evil, but contrariwise blessing.' This threefold cord of scripture should not easily be broken. To render evil for evil is brutish; to render evil for good is devilish; to render good for evil is Christian. The heathens had this maxim, *Nemeni lædere nisi lacessitus injuria*; they thought it lawful to wrong none unless first provoked with an injury: but the sunlight of scripture shines brighter than the lamp of reason; *Love your enemies*; when grace comes into the heart, it works a strange alteration: when a scion is ingrafted into the stock, it partakes of the nature and sap of the tree, and brings forth the same fruit; take a crab, ingraft it into a pippin, it brings forth the same fruit as the pippin; so he who was once of a sour, crabbed disposition, given to revenge; when he once partakes of the sap of the heavenly olive; he bears generous fruit, he is full of love to his enemies: grace allays the passion, and melts the heart into compassion; as the sun draws up many thick noxious vapours from the

earth and sea, and returns them in sweet showers, so a gracious heart returns all the unkindnesses and discourtesies of his enemies with the sweet influences and distillations of love ; thus David, Psal. xxxv. 18. ' They rewarded me evil for good ; but as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth, I humbled my soul with fasting,' &c. Some would have rejoiced, he wept ; some would have put on scarlet, David put on sackcloth ; this is the rarity, or rather miracle of meekness, it retorts good for evil ; thus we have seen the nature of meekness.

### SECT. 1.

#### *Shewing the Character of a True Saint.*

*Use 1.* It shews us the badge of a true saint ; he is of a meek, candid spirit, ' he is not easily provoked ; he takes every thing in the best sense, and conquers malice with mildness. I would to God all who profess themselves saints were bespangled with this grace. We are known to belong to Christ, when we wear his livery ; he is a saint, whose spirit is so meekened, that he can smother prejudices and bury unkindnesses ; a passion of tears doth better become a Christian than a passion of anger ; every saint is Christ's spouse, Cant. iv. 8. It becomes Christ's spouse to be meek ; if any injury be offered to the spouse she leaves it to her husband to revenge ; it is unseemly for Christ's spouse to strike.

### SECT. 2.

#### *Containing a Suasive to Meekness.*

*Use 2. Exhort.* Let me beseech all Christians to labour to be eminent in this superlative grace of meekness, Zeph. ii. 3. ' Seek meekness : ' Seeking

implies we have lost it; therefore we must make an hue and cry after it to find it, Col. iii. 12. 'Put on therefore, as the elect of God, meekness,' Put it on as a garment, never to be left off. Meekness is a necessary ingredient into every thing. 1. It is necessary in instruction, 2 Tim. ii. 25. 'In meekness instructing,' &c. Meekness conquers the opposers of truth; meekness melts the heart; soft words are softening. 2. Meekness is necessary in hearing the word, James i. 21. 'Receive with meekness the ingrafted word;' he who comes to the word either with passion or prejudice, gets no good, but hurt; he turns wine into poison, and stabs himself with the sword of the Spirit. 3. Meekness is needful in reproofs, Gal. vi. 1. 'If a man be overtaken with a fault, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness.' The Greek is, put him in joint again; if a bone be out of joint, the surgeon must not use a rough hand, that may chance to break another bone, but he must come gently to work, and afterwards bind it up softly; so if a brother be through inadvertency overtaken, we must not come to him in a fury of passion, but with a spirit of meekness labour to restore him. I shall lay down several motives or arguments to meeken the spirits of men.

1. *Motive.* Let me propound examples of meekness.

1. The example of Jesus Christ, Matt. xxi. 5. 'Thy King cometh unto thee meek.' Christ was the pattern of meekness. I Pet. ii. 23. 'When he was reviled, he reviled not again;' his enemies' words were more bitter than the gall they gave him; but Christ's words were smoother than oil; he prayed and wept for his enemies; he calls to us to learn of him, Matt. xi. 29. 'Learn of me, for I am meek.' Christ doth not bid us, saith Austin, learn of him to work miracles; to open the eyes of the blind, to raise the dead, but he would have us learn of him



to be meek : if we do not imitate his life we cannot be saved by his death.

2. Let us set before our eyes the example of some of the saints who have shined in this grace. Moses was a man of unparalleled meekness, Numb. xii. 3. ' Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.' How many injuries did he put up with ? when the people of Israel murmured against him, instead of falling into a rage, he falls to prayer for them, Exod. xv. 24, 25. The text saith, they murmured at the waters of Marah ; sure the waters were not so bitter as the spirits of the people ; but they could not provoke him to passion, but petition. Another time when they wanted water, they fell a chiding with Moses, Exod. xvii. 3. ' Wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children with thirst ? ' as if they had said, if we die, we will lay our death to thy charge ; would not this exasperate ? sure it would have required the meekness of an angel to bear this ; but behold Moses his meekness, he did not give them an unbecoming word ! though they were in a storm, he was in a calm ; they chide, but he prays. Oh that as the spirit of Elijah did rest upon Elisha, so that some of the spirit of Moses, this meek man, (or rather earthly angel) may rest upon us ! Another eminent pattern of meekness was David ; when Shimei cursed David, and Abishai, one of David's life guards would have beheaded Shimei ; No, saith King David, ' Let him alone, and let him curse,' 2 Sam. xvi. 11. And when Saul had wronged and abused David, and it was in his power to have taken Saul napping, and have killed him, 1 Sam. xxvi. 7, 12. yet he would not touch Saul, but called God to be umpire, ver. 23. Here was a mirror of meekness.

3. The examples of heathens ; though their meekness could not properly be called grace, be-

cause it grew not upon the right stock of faith, yet it was beautiful in its kind. Pericles, when one did revile him, and followed him home to his gate at night, railing upon him, he answered not a word, but commanded one of his servants to light a torch, and bring the railer home to his own house. Frederick duke of Saxony, when he was angry, would shut himself up in his closet, and let none come near him till he had mastered his passion. Plutarch reports of the Pythagoreans, if they had chanced to fall out in the day, they would embrace and be friends ere sun-set. Cicero, in one of his orations, reports of Pompey the great, he was a man of a meek disposition, he admitted all to come to him so freely, and heard the complaints of them that were wronged, so mildly, that he excelled all the princes before him; he was of that sweet temper, that it was hard to say whether his enemies did more fear his valour, or his subjects love his meekness. Julius Cæsar not only forgave Brutus and Cassius, his enemies, but advanced them: he thought himself most honoured by acts of clemency and meekness. Did the spring-head of nature rise so high, and shall not grace rise higher? shall we debase faith below reason; let us write after these fair copies.

2. *Motive.* Meekness is a great ornament to a Christian, 1 Pet. iii. 4. 'The ornament of a meek spirit.' How amiable is a saint in God's eye when adorned with this jewel? what the Psalmist says of praise, Psal. xxxiii. 1. the same may I say of meekness, it is 'comely for the righteous; no garment more becoming a Christian than meekness; therefore we are bid to put on this garment, Col. iii. 12. 'Put on therefore as the elect of God meekness.' A meek spirit credits religion, silenceth malice; it is the varnish that puts a lustre upon holiness, and sets off the gospel with a better gloss.

3. *Motive* This is the way to be like God; God

is meek towards them that provoke him : how many black mouths are opened daily against the Majesty of heaven ? how do men tear his name ? vex his Spirit ? crucify his Son afresh ? they walk up and down the earth as so many devils covered with flesh, yet the Lord is meek, 'not willing that any should perish,' 2 Pet. iii. How easily could God crush sinners, and kick them into hell ! but he moderates his anger ; though he be full of majesty, yet full of meekness ; in him is mixed princely greatness, and fatherly mildness ; as he hath his sceptre of royalty, so also his throne of grace. O how should this make us fall in love with meekness ! here we bear a kind of likeness to God ; it is not profession makes us like God, but imitation ; where meekness is wanting, we are not like men ; where it is we are like God.

4. *Motive.* Meekness argues a noble and excellent spirit ; a meek man is a valorous man, he gets a victory over himself. Passion ariseth from imbecility and weakness ; therefore we may observe old men and children are more choleric than others ; strength of passion argues weakness of judgment, but the meek man who is able to conquer his fury, is the most puissant and victorious, Prov. xvi. 32. 'He that is slow to anger, is better than the mighty ; and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city.' To yield to one's passion is easy ; it is swimming along with the tide of corrupt nature ; but to turn head against nature, to resist passion, to 'overcome evil with good,' this is like a Christian ; this is that spiritual chivalry and fortitude of mind as deserves the trophies of victory, and the garland of praise.

5. Meekness is the best way to conquer and melt the heart of an enemy. When Saul lay at David's mercy, and he only cut off the skirt of his robe, how was Saul's heart affected with David's meekness ! 1 Sam. xxiv. 16, 17. 'Is this thy voice, my

son David? and Saul lift up his voice and wept; and he said to David, thou art more righteous than I: for thou hast rewarded me good, forasmuch as when the Lord had delivered me into thy hand, thou killedst me not; wherefore the Lord reward thee good,' &c. This heaping of coals melts and thaws the heart of others; it is the greatest victory to overcome an enemy without striking a blow; the fire will go where the wedge cannot; mildness prevails more than fierceness; passion makes an enemy of a friend: meekness makes a friend of an enemy; the meek Christian shall have letters testimonial, even from his adversary. It is reported of Philip, king of Macedon, that when it was told him Nicanor did openly rail against his majesty, the king instead of putting him to death (as his counsel advised) sent Nicanor a rich present, which did so overcome the man's heart, that he went up and down to recant what he had said against the king, and did highly extol the king's clemency. Roughness hardens men's hearts, meekness causeth them to relent, 2 Kings vi. 22. When the king of Israel feasted the captives he had taken in war, they were more conquered by his meekness, than by his sword, 2 Kings vi. 23. 'The bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel.'

6. *Motive.* Consider the great promise in the text; 'The meek shall inherit the earth;' this argument perhaps will prevail with those who desire to have earthly possessions. Some may object, If I forbear and forgive, I shall lose my right at last, and be turned out of all? No, God hath here entered into bond, 'the meek shall inherit the earth:' The unmeek man is in a sad condition, there is no place remains for him but hell; for he hath no promise made to him either of earth or heaven; it is the meek shall inherit the earth.

*Obj.* How do the meek inherit the earth, when they are strangers in the earth? Heb. xi. 13.

*Ans.* The meek are said to inherit the earth, not that the earth is their chief inheritance, or that they have always the greatest share here; but,

1. They are the inheritors of the earth, because though they have not always the greatest part of the earth, yet they have the best right to it. The word inherit, saith Ambrose, notes the saints' title to the earth. The saints' title is best, being members of Christ, who is Lord of all: Adam did not only lose his title to heaven when he fell, but to the earth too; and till we are incorporated into Christ, we do not fully recover our title; I deny not but the wicked have a civil right to the earth, which the laws of the land give them, but not a sacred right. Only the meek Christian hath a scripture-title to his land; we count that the best title which is held *in capite*; the saints hold their right to the earth *in capite*, in their head Christ, who is 'the Prince of the kings of the earth,' Rev. i. 5. In this sense, he who hath but a foot of land, inherits more than he who hath a thousand acres, because he hath a better and more juridical right to it.

2. The meek Christian is said to inherit the earth, because he inherits the blessing of the earth; the wicked man hath the earth, but not as a fruit of God's favour: he hath it as a dog hath poisoned bread, it doth him more hurt than good; a wicked man lives in the earth as one that lives in an infectious air, he is infected by his mercies; the fat of the earth will but make him fry and blaze the more in hell; so that a wicked man may be said not to have what he hath, because he hath not the blessing; but the meek saint enjoys the earth as a pledge of God's love; the curse and poison is taken out of the earth. Psal. xxxvii. 11. 'The meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the a-

bundance of peace;’ on which words Austin gives this gloss; wicked men, saith he, may delight themselves in the abundance of cattle and riches, but the meek man delights himself in the abundance of peace; what he hath, he doth possess with inward serenity and quietness.

*Caution.* When it is said the meek shall inherit the earth, it is not meant that they shall inherit no more than the earth; they shall inherit heaven too; if they should only inherit the earth, then (saith Chrysostom) how could it be said, ‘Blessed are the meek?’ the meek have the earth only for their sojourning house; they have heaven for their mansion-house, Psal. cxlix. 4. ‘He will beautify the meek with salvation.’ The meek beautify religion, and God will beautify them with salvation; salvation is the port we all desire to sail to; it is the harvest and vintage of souls; the meek are they which shall reap this harvest; the meek shall wear the embroidered robe of salvation. ‘The meek are lords of the earth, and heirs of salvation,’ Heb. i. 14.

7. *Motive.* The mischief of an unmeek spirit: 1. There is nothing makes such room for the devil to come into the heart and take possession, as wrath and anger, Eph. iv. 26, 27. ‘Let not the sun go down upon your wrath, neither give place to the devil;’ when men let forth passion, they let in Satan; the wrathful man hath the devil for his bed-fellow. 2. Passion doth hinder peace; the meek Christian hath sweet quiet and harmony in his soul; but passion puts the soul into a disorder? it not only clouds reason, but disturbs conscience; he doth not possess himself whom passion possesseth; it is no wonder if they have no peace of conscience, who make so little conscience of peace; wrathfulness grieves the Spirit of God, Eph. iv. 30, 31. and if the Spirit be grieved, he will be gone; we care not to stay in smoky houses; the Spirit of God loves

not to be in that heart which is full of the vapours and fumes of distempered passion.

8. *Motive.* Another argument to cool the intemperate heat of our cursed hearts, is to consider that all the injuries and unkind usages, we meet with from the world, do not fall out by chance, but are disposed of by the all-wise God for our good; many are like the foolish cur that snarles at the stone, never looking to the hand that threw it; or like the horse, who being spurred by the rider, bites the snaffle; did we look higher than instruments, our hearts would grow meek and calm. David looked beyond Shimei's rage, 2 Sam. xvi. 11. 'Let him curse, for the Lord hath bidden him;' what wisdom were it for Christians to see the hand of God in all the barbarism and incivilities of men! Job eyed God in his affliction, and that meekened his spirit, 'The Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord,' Job i. 21. He doth not say the Chaldeans have taken away, but the 'Lord hath taken away; what made Christ so meek in his sufferings? he did not look at Judas or Pilate, but at his Father, John xviii. 11. 'The cup which my Father hath given me;' when wicked men do revile and injure us, they are but God's executioners; who is angry with the executioner?

And as God hath an hand in all the affronts and discourtesies we receive from men (for they do but hand them over to us) so God will do us good by all if we belong to him; 1 Sam. xvi. 12. It may be, saith David, 'that the Lord will look on me in mine affliction, and will requite me good for his cursing;' usually when the Lord intends us some signal mercy, he fits us for it by some eminent trial, as Moses' hand was first leprous before it wrought salvation, Exod. iv. 6. so God may let his people be belepered with the cursings and revilings of men before he shower down some blessing upon them;

‘it may be the Lord will requite me good for his cursing this day.’

9. *Motive.* Want of meekness evidenceth want of grace; true grace inflames love, and moderates anger; grace is like the file which smooths the rough iron, it files off the ruggedness of a man’s spirit; grace saith to the heart as Christ did to the angry sea, Mark iv. 39. ‘Peace, be still.’ So where there is grace in the heart, it stills the raging of passion, and makes a calm. He who is in a perpetual phrensy, letting loose the reins to wrath and malice, never yet felt the sweet efficacy of grace. It is one of the sins of the heathen, Implacable, Rom. i. 31. a revengeful, cankered heart, is not only heathenish, but devilish, James iii. 14, 15. ‘If ye have bitter, envying and strife in your hearts, this wisdom descendeth not from above, but is devilish. The old serpent spits forth the poison of malice and revenge.’

10. *Motive.* If all that hath been said will not serve to master this bedlam humour of wrath and anger, let me tell you, ye are the persons whom God speaks of, who hate to be reformed; ye are rebels against the word: read and tremble, Isa. xxx. 8. 9. ‘Now go write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come, for ever and ever, that this is a rebellious people, children that will not hear the law of the Lord.’ If nothing yet will charm down the wrathful devil, let me tell you, God hath charged every man not to meddle, nor have any league of friendship with you, Prov. xxii. 24. ‘Make no friendship with an angry man, and with a furious man thou shalt not go.’ What a monster is he among men, that every one is warned to beware of, and not come near, as one who is unfit for human society; make no league saith God with THAT MAN; if thou takest him into thy society, thou takest a snake into thy bosom;



'with a furious man thou shalt not go.' Wilt thou walk with the devil? The furious man is possessed with a wrathful devil.

Oh that all this might help to meeken and sweeten Christian spirits!

*Obj.* But it is my nature to be passionate.

*Ans.* 1. This is sinful arguing; it is secretly to lay our sin upon God; we learned this from Adam Gen. iii. 12. 'The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat;' rather than Adam would confess his sin, he would father it upon God; 'the woman thou gavest me;' as if he had said, if thou hadst not given this woman to me, I had not eat. So saith one, it is my nature, this is the froward, peevish nature God hath given me; oh no, thou chargest God falsely; God gave thee no such nature; 'he made man upright,' Eccl. vii. 25. God made thee straight, thou madest thyself crooked; all thy affections at first, thy joy, love, anger, were set in order as the stars in their right orbs, but thou didst misplace them, and make them move eccentric; at first the affections, like several musical instruments well-tuned, did make a sweet concert, but sin was the jarring string that brought all out of tune; vain man, plead not it is thy nature to be angry, thank thyself for it; nature's spring was pure, till sin poisoned the spring.

*Ans.* 2. Is it thy nature to be fierce and angry? this is so far from being an excuse, that it makes it so much the worse; it is the nature of a toad to poison, that makes it the more hateful; if a man were indicted for stealing, and he should say to the judge, Spare me, it is my nature to steal, were this any excuse? the judge would say, Thou deservest the rather to die: Sinner get a new nature, 'flesh and blood cannot enter into the kingdom of God,'

SECT. 3.

*How to attain this Grace of Meekness.*

*Quest.* How shall I do to be possessed of this excellent grace of meekness?

*Ans.* 1. Often look upon the meekness of Christ? the scholar that would write well, hath his eye often upon the copy.

2. Pray earnestly that God will meeken thy spirit; God is called 'the God of all grace,' 1 Pet. v. 10. He hath all the graces in his gift, sue to him for this grace of meekness; if one were patron of all the livings in the land, men would sue to him for a living: God is patron of all the graces, let us sue to him; mercy comes in at the door of prayer, Ezek. xxxvi. 37. 'I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them:' meekness is the commodity we want, let us send prayer as our factor over to heaven to procure it for us, and pray in faith; when faith sets prayer on work, prayer sets God on work; all divine blessings come streaming to us thro' this golden channel of prayer.



MATT. v. 6. *Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after Righteousness.*

CHAP. XIII.

*Describing the Nature of Spiritual hunger.*

WE are now come to the fourth step of blessedness, 'Blessed are they that hunger.' The words fall into two parts.

1. A duty implied.
2. A promise annexed.

1. A duty implied, 'Blessed are they that hunger.' Spiritual hunger is a blessed hunger.

*Quest. 1.* What is meant by hunger?

*Ans.* Hunger is put for desire, Isa. xxvi. 9. Spiritual hunger is the rational appetite whereby the soul pants after that which it apprehends most suitable and proportionable to itself.

*Quest. 2.* Whence is this hunger?

*Ans.* Hunger is from a sense of want; he who spiritually hungers, hath a real sense of his own indigence, he wants righteousness.

*Quest. 3.* What is meant by righteousness?

*Ans.* There is a two-fold righteousness.

1. Of imputation. 2. Of implantation.

1. A righteousness of imputation, viz. Christ's righteousness, Jer. xxiii. 6. 'He shall be called the Lord our righteousness.' This is as truly ours to justify, as it is Christ's to bestow; by virtue of this righteousness God looks upon us as if we had never sinned, Numb. xxiii. 21. this is a perfect righteousness, Col. ii. 10. 'Ye are complete in him;' this doth not only cover, but it adorns; he who hath this righteousness, is equal to the most illustrious saints; the weakest believer is justified as much as the strongest; this is a Christian's triumph; when he is defiled in himself, he is undefiled in his Head; in this blessed righteousness we shine brighter than the angels; this righteousness is worth hungering after.

2. A righteousness of implantation; that is, inherent righteousness; viz. the graces of the Spirit; holiness of heart and life, which Cajetan calls universal righteousness; this a pious soul hungers after.

This is a blessed hunger; bodily hunger cannot make a man so miserable, as spiritual hunger makes him blessed; this evidenceth life; a dead man cannot hunger; hunger proceeds from life; the first thing the child doth when it is born, is to hunger

after the breast; spiritual hunger follows upon the new birth, 1 Pet. ii. 2. Saint Bernard in one of his soliloquies comforts himself with this, That sure he had the truth of grace in him, because he had in his heart a strong desire after God; it is happy, when, though we have not what we should, we desire what we have not; the appetite is as well from God as the food.

SECT. 1.

*The inferences drawn from the Proposition.*

*Use 1. Inform. Branch 1.* See here at what a low price God sets heavenly things; it is but hungering and thirsting, Isa. lv. 1. 'Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, buy without money.' We are not bid to bring any merits as the papists would do; nor to bring a sum of money to purchase righteousness; rich men would be loath to do that: all that is required is to bring an appetite. Christ 'hath fulfilled all righteousness;' we are only to 'hunger and thirst after righteousness;' this is equal and reasonable; God requires not rivers of oil, but sighs and tears; the invitation of the gospel is free; if a friend invite guests to his table, he doth not expect they should bring any money to pay for their dinner, only come with an appetite; so, saith God, it is not penance, pilgrimage, self-righteousness I require; only bring a stomach, 'Hunger and thirst after righteousness.' God might have set Christ and salvation at an higher price; but he hath much beaten down the price: now as this shews the sweetness of God's nature, he is not as hard master; so it shews us the inexcusableness of them who perish under the gospel; what apology can any man make at the day of judgment, when God shall ask that question, Friend, why

didst thou not embrace Christ? I set Christ and grace at a low rate; if thou hadst but hungered after righteousness, thou mightest have had it, but thou didst slight Christ; thou hadst such low thoughts of righteousness, that thou wouldst not hunger after it; how dost thou think to escape who hast neglected 'so great salvation?' The easier the terms of the gospel are, the sorer punishment shall they be thought worthy of who unworthily refuse such an offer.

*Branch 2.* It shews us a true character of a godly man, he hungers and thirsts after spiritual things, Isa. xxvi. 9. Psal. lxxiii. 25. A true saint is carried upon the wing of desire; it is the very constitution of a gracious soul to thirst after God; Psal. xlii. 2. In the word preached, now he is big with desire; these are some of the pantings of his soul, Lord, thou hast led me into thy courts, O that I may have thy sweet presence, that 'thy glory may fill the temple!' This is thy limning house; wilt thou draw some sacred lineaments of grace upon my soul, that I may be more assimilated and changed into the likeness of my dear Saviour. In prayer, how is the soul filled with passionate longings after Christ! prayer is expressed by groans unutterable, Rom. viii. 26. The heart sends up whole volleys of sighs to heaven; Lord, one beam of thy love, one drop of thy blood!

## SECT. 2.

*Containing a Reprehension of such as do not hunger after Righteousness.*

*Use 2. Reproof. Branch 1.* It reproves such as have none of this spiritual hunger; they have no winged desires, the edge of their affections is blunted; honey is not sweet to them that are sick of a

fever, and have their tongues imbittered with choler: so they who are soul-sick, and 'in the gall of bitterness,' find no sweetness in God or religion; sin tastes sweeter to them, they have no spiritual hunger. That men have not this hunger after righteousness, appears by these seven demonstrations.

1. They never felt any emptiness, they are full of their own righteousness, Rom. x. 3. Now the full stomach loathes the honey-comb; this was Laodicea's disease, she was full, and had no stomach either to Christ's gold or eye-slave, Rev. iii. 17. When men are filled with pride, that flatuous distempler hinders holy longings; as when the stomach is full of wind, it spoils the appetite; none so empty of grace, as he that thinks he is full; he hath most need of righteousness, that doth least want it.

2. That men do not hunger after righteousness, appears, because they can make a shift well enough to be without it. If they have oil in the cruse, the world coming in, they are well content; grace is a commodity that is least missed; you shall hear men complain they want health, they want trading, but never complain they want righteousness; if men lose a meal or two, they think themselves half undone; but they can stay away from ordinances, which are the conduits of grace: do they hunger after righteousness, who are satisfied without it? nay, who desire to be excused from feeding upon the gospel-banquet; sure he hath no appetite, who entreats to be excused from eating.

3. It is a sign they have none of this spiritual hunger, who desire rather sleep than food; they are more drowsy than hungry; some there are who come to the word that they may get a nap, to whom I may say as Christ did to Peter, Mark xiv. 37. 'Couldst thou not watch one hour?' It is strange to see a man sleep at his meat; others there are who have a deep sleep fallen upon them, they are

asleep in security, and they hate a soul-awakening ministry; while they sleep, 'their damnation slumbereth not,' 2 Pet. ii. 9.

4. It appears men have no spiritual hunger, because they refuse their food; Christ and grace are offered, nay, pressed upon them, but they put away salvation from them, as the froward child puts away the breast, Psal. lxxxi. 11. Acts xiii. 46. Such are your fanatics and enthusiasts, who put away the blessed ordinances, and pretend revelations. That is a strange revelation, that tells a man he may live without food; these prefer husks before manna; they live upon airy notions, being fed by the prince of the air.

5. It is a sign they have none of this spiritual hunger, who delight more in the garnishing of the dish than in the food; these are they who look more after elegance and notion in preaching, than solid matter; it argues either a wanton palate, or a surfeited stomach, to feed on salads and kickshaws, neglecting wholesome food, 1 Tim. vi. 3, 4. 'If any man consent not to wholesome words, he is proud, knowing nothing,' &c. The plainest truth hath its beauty; they have no spiritual hunger, that desire only to feast their fancy; of such the prophet speaks, Ezek. xxxiii. 32: 'Thou art to them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument.' If a man were invited to a feast, and there being music at the feast, he should so listen to the music, that he did not mind his meat, you would say, sure he is not hungry; so when men are for jingling words, and like rather gallantry of speech, than spirituality of matter, it is a sign they have surfeited stomachs, and itching ears.

6. They evidence little hunger after righteousness, that prefer other things before it; viz. their profits and recreations: If a boy, when he should be at

dinner, is playing in the street, it is a sign he hath no appetite to his meat; were he hungry, he would not prefer his play before his food: so, when men prefer 'vain things which cannot profit,' before the blood of Christ, and the grace of the Spirit, it is a sign they have no palate or stomach to heavenly things.

7. It is a sign men have no spiritual hunger, when they are more for disputes in religion than practice. Robertus Gallus thought he saw in his dream a great feast, and some were biting on hard stones; when men feed only on hard questions and controversies, (like some of the schoolmens *utrams* and distinctions) as whether one may partake with him that hath not the work of grace in his heart? Whether one ought or not to separate in a church in case of mal-administration? What is to be thought of Pedobaptism? &c. When these niceties and criticisms in religion take up men's heads, neglecting faith and holiness, these do pick bones, and not feed on meat. Sceptics in religion have not brains, but cold hearts; did men hunger and thirst after righteousness, they would propound to themselves such questions as these, How shall we do to be saved? How shall we make our calling and election sure? How shall we mortify our corruptions? But such as revel out their time in frothy and litigious disputes, I call Heaven to witness, they are strangers to this text, they 'do not hunger and thirst after righteousness.'

### SECT. 3.

*Containing a Reproof of them that do hunger, but not after Righteousness.*

*Branch 2. Reproof.* It reproves them who, instead of hungering and thirsting after righteousness, thirst after riches: this is the thirst of covetous men, they



desire Mammon, not manna, Amos ii. 7. 'That pant after the dust of the earth.' This is the disease most are sick of, an immoderate appetite after the world; but these things will no more satiate, than drink will quench a dropsied man's thirst; covetousness is idolatry, Col. iii. 5. Too many protestants set up the idol of gold in the temple of their hearts; this sin of covetousness is the most hardly rooted out; commonly when other sins leave men, this sin abides; wantonness is the sin of youth, worldliness the sin of old age.

*Branch 3. Reproof.* It reproves them who hunger and thirst after unrighteousness: here I shall indite three sorts of persons.

1. It reproves such as thirst after other mens' lands and possessions; this the scripture calls a mighty sin, Amos v. 12. Thus Ahab thirsted after Naboth's vineyard; this is an hungry age wherein we live; we have a great deal of this hungering and thirsting, which hath made so many state-thieves; men have fleeced others to feather themselves. What a brave challenge did Samuel make? 1 Sam. xii. 3. 'Behold here I am, witness against me before the Lord, and before his Anointed, Whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? of whose hand have I received any bribe?' &c. Few that have been in power can say thus, Whose ox have we taken? whose house have we plundered? whose estate have we sequestered? Nay, whose ox have they not taken? Goods unjustly gotten, seldom go to the third heir. Read the plunderer's curse, Isa. xxxiii. 1. 'Wo to thee that spoilest, and thou wast not spoiled; when thou shalt cease to spoil, thou shalt be spoiled.' Ahab paid dear for the vineyard, when the devil carried away his soul, and the dogs licked his blood, 1 Kings xxi. 19. He that lives on rapine, dies a fool, Jer. xvii.

11. 'He that getteth riches, and not by right, at his end shall be a fool.'

2. It reproves such as hunger and thirst after revenge; this is a devilish thirst; though it were more Christian and safe to smother an injury, yet our nature is prone to this disease of revenge; we have the sting of the bee, not the honey; malice having broken the bars of reason, grows savage, and carries its remedy in the scabbard: heathens will rise up against Christians, who have stopped the vein of revengeful passion, when it hath begun to vent: I have read of Phocion, who being wrongfully condemned to die, desired that his son might not remember the injuries which the Athenians had done to him, nor revenge his blood.

3. It reproves such as hunger and thirst to satisfy their impure lusts; sinners are said to sin with greediness, Eph. iv. 19. So Amnon was sick till he had defiled Tamar's chastity; never doth an hungry man come with more eagerness to his food, than a wicked man doth to his sin; and when Satan sees men have such an appetite, commonly he will provide a dish they love; he will set the forbidden tree before them; they that thirst to commit sin, shall thirst as Dives did in hell, and not have a drop of water to cool their tongue.

#### SECT. 4.

##### *Shewing the signs of Spiritual Hunger.*

*Use 3. Trial.* Let us put ourselves upon a trial whether we hunger and thirst after righteousness; I shall give you five signs by which you may judge of this hunger.

1. *Sign.* Hunger is a painful thing. Esau, when he was returned from hunting, was almost dead with hunger, Gen. xxv. 32. Psal. cvii. 5. 'Hungry

and thirsty, their soul fainted in them:' so a man that hungers after righteousness, is in anguish of soul, and ready to faint away for it; he finds a want of Christ and grace, he is distressed and in pain till he hath his spiritual hunger stilled and allayed.

2. *Sign.* Hunger is satisfied with nothing but food; bring an hungry man flowers, music, tell him pleasant stories, nothing will content him but food. Shall I die for thirst? saith Samson, Judg. xv. 18. So a man that hungers and thirsts after righteousness, saith, Give me Christ, or I die; Lord, What wilt thou give me, seeing I go Christless? what though I have parts, wealth honour and esteem in the world? all is nothing without Christ; 'shew me the Lord, and it sufficeth.' Let me have Christ to clothe me, Christ to feed me, Christ to intercede for me; while the soul is Christless, it is restless; nothing but the water-springs of Christ's blood can quench its thirst.

3. *Sign.* Hunger wrestles with difficulties, and makes an adventure for food; we say hunger breaks through stone walls: Gen. xlii. 1, 2. The soul that spiritually hungers, is resolved, Christ it must have; and, to use Basil's expression, the hungry soul is almost distracted till it enjoys the thing it hungers after.

4. *Sign.* An hungry man falls to his meat with an appetite; you need not make an oration to an hungry man, and persuade him to eat: so he who hungers after righteousness, feeds eagerly on an ordinance, Jer. xv. 16. 'Thy words were found, and I did eat them;' in the sacrament he feeds with appetite upon the body and blood of the Lord; God loves to see us feed hungrily on the bread of life.

5. *Sign.* An hungry man tastes sweetness in his meat; so he that hungers after righteousness, doth relish a sweetness in heavenly things; Christ is to him all marrow, yea, the quintessence of delights, 1 Pet. ii. 3. 'If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is

gracious: He that spiritually hungers, tastes the promises sweet, nay, tastes a reproof sweet. 'To the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet,' Prov. xxvii. 7. A bitter reproof is sweet; he can feed upon the myrrh of the gospel as well as the honey; by these notes of trial we may judge of ourselves whether we hunger and thirst after righteousness.

SECT. 5.

*Comfort to such as do hunger, wherein is shewn the Differences of Hunger.*

*Use 4. Consolation.* It may serve to comfort the hearts of those who do hunger and thirst after righteousness; I doubt not but it is the grief of many a good heart, that he cannot be more holy, that he cannot serve God better. 'Blessed are they that hunger.' Though thou hast not so much righteousness as thou wouldst, yet thou art blessed, because thou hungerest after it; desire is the best discovery of a Christian; actions may be counterfeit; a man may do a good action for a bad end; so did Jehu. Actions may be compulsory; a man may be forced to do that which is good, but not to will that which is good; therefore we are to cherish good desires, and to bless God for them; oftentimes a child of God hath nothing to shew for himself but desires: Neh. i. 11. 'Thy servants who desire to fear thy name.' These hungerings after righteousness proceed from love; a man doth not desire that which he doth not love; if thou didst not love Christ, thou couldst not hunger after him.

*Obj.* 1. If my hunger were right, then I could take comfort in it; but I fear it is counterfeit; hypocrites have their desires.

*Ans.* That I may the better settle a doubting Christian, I shall shew the difference between true and false desires, spiritual hunger and carnal.

1. The hypocrite doth not desire grace for itself; he desires grace only as a bridge to lead him over to heaven; he doth not so much thirst after Grace as Glory; he doth not so much desire the Way of righteousness, as the Crown of righteousness; his desire is not to be made like Christ, but to reign with Christ; this was Balaam's desire, Numb. xxiii. 10. 'Let me die the death of the righteous:' such desires as these are found among the damned, this is the hypocrite's hunger; but a child of God desires grace for itself, and Christ for himself; to a believer, not only heaven is precious, but Christ is precious, 1 Pet. ii. 7.

2. The hypocrite's desire is conditional; he would have heaven and his sins too; heaven and his pride, heaven and his covetousness: the young man would have Christ, but there is some sin he must not be uncivil to, but gratify; this is the hypocrite's hunger; but true delight is absolute. Give me, saith the soul, Christ on any terms; let God propound what articles he will, I will subscribe to them. Would he have me deny myself? would he have me mortify sin? I am content to do any thing so I may have Christ; hypocrites would have Christ, but they are loath to part with a lust for him; they are like a man that would have a lease, but is loath to pay down the fine.

3. Hypocrites desires are but desires, they are lazy and sluggish; when one excited Lipsius to the study of virtue, saith he, My mind is to it. Prov. xxi. 25. 'The desire of the slothful killeth him, for his hands refuse to labour.' Many stand as the Carman in the fable, crying, "Help, Hercules, when his wain stuck in the mud, when he should rather have put his shoulder to the wheel." Men would be saved, but they will take no pains. Doth

he desire water that will not let down the bucket into the well? but true desire is quickened into endeavour, Isa. xxvi. 9. 'With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early;' They are the violent take heaven by force, Matt. xii. 12. The love-sick spouse, though she was wounded, and her vale taken away, yet she follows after Christ, Cant. vi. 7. Desire is the weight of the soul, which sets it a going; as the eagle which desires her prey, makes haste to it, Job xxxix. ult. 'Where the slain are, there is she;' the eagle hath sharpness of sight to discover her prey, and swiftness of wing to fly to it: So the soul that hungers after righteousness, is carried swiftly to it in the use of holy ordinances.

4. The hypocrite's desires are cheap; he would have spiritual things, but he will be at no charges for them; he cares not how much money he parts with for his lusts; he hath money to spend upon a drunken companion, but he hath no money to part with for the maintaining of God's ordinances; hypocrites cry up religion, but cry down maintenance of ministers. But true desires are costly; David would not offer burnt-offerings without cost, 1 Chron. xxi. 24. An hungry man will give any thing for food; as it fell out in the siege of Samaria, 2 Kings vi. 25. That man did never hunger after Christ, who thinks much of parting with a little silver for the pearl of price.

5. Hypocrites' desires are flashy and transient; they are quickly gone, like the wind that stays not long in one corner; or like an hot fit, which is soon over. While the hypocrite is under legal terror, or in affliction, he hath some good desires, but the hot fit is soon over; his goodness, like a fiery comet, soon spends and evaporates; but true desire is constant. It is observable, the Greek word is in the participle, 'blessed are they that are hung-

ering; though they have righteousness, yet they are still hungering after more. The hypocrites' desire is like the motion of a watch which is quickly down. The desire of a godly man is like the beating of the pulse, which lasts as long as life, Psal. cxix. 20. 'My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath to thy judgments.' And that we might not think this pang of desire would soon be over, he adds, at all times. David's desire after God was not an high colour in a fit, but the constant complexion of his soul. In the temple the fire was not to go out by night, Lev. vi. 18. 'The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar.' There was, saith Cyril, a mystery in it, to shew that we must be ever burning in holy affections and desires.

6. Hypocrites' desires are unseasonable, they are not well timed; they put off their hungering after righteousness till it be too late; they are like the foolish virgins that came knocking when the door was shut, Matth. xxv. 10. In the time of health and prosperity the stream of the affections did run another way; it was sin the hypocrite desired, not righteousness; when he is to die; and can keep his sins no longer, now he would have his grace as a passport to carry him to heaven. Luke xiii. 25. This is the hypocrite's fault, his faith is too early, and his desires are too late; his faith began to bud in the morning of his infancy, he believed ever since he could remember, but his desires after Christ begin not to put forth till the evening of old age; he sends forth his desires when his last breath is going forth; as if a man should desire a pardon after the sentence is passed; these bed-ridden desires are suspicious; but true desires are timely and seasonable: a gracious heart seeks first the kingdom of God, Matt. v. 33. David's thirst after God was early, Psal. lxxiii. 1. The wise virgins got their oil betimes before the bride-groom came.

Thus we see the difference between a true and false hunger: they who can find this true hunger, are blessed, and may take comfort in it.

*Obj. 2.* But my hunger after righteousness is so weak, that I fear it is not true?

*Ans. 1.* Though the pulse beats but weak, it shews there is life; and that weak desires should not be discouraged, there is a promise made to them, Matt. xii. 20. 'A bruised reed he will not break;' a reed is a weak thing, but especially when it is bruised; yet this bruised reed shall not be broken, but, like Aaron's dry rod, bud and blossom. In case of weakness, look to Christ thy high-priest; he is merciful, therefore will bear with thy infirmities; he is mighty, therefore will help them.

*Ans. 2.* If thy desires after righteousness seem to be weak and languid, yet a Christian may sometimes take a measure of his spiritual estate as well by the judgment as by the affections. What is that thou esteemest most in thy judgment? is it Christ and grace? this is a good evidence for heaven; it was a sign Saint Paul did bear entire love to Christ, because he esteemed this pearl above all; he counted other things 'but dung, that he might win Christ,' Phil. iii. 8.

*Obj. 3.* But, saith a child of God, that which much eclipseth my comfort is, I have not that hunger which once I had. There was a time when I did hunger after a Sabbath, because then the manna fell; 'I called the Sabbath a delight;' I remember the time when I did hunger after the body and blood of the Lord; I came to a sacrament as an hungry man to a feast; but now it is otherwise with me, I have not those hungerings as formerly.

*Ans. 1.* It is indeed an ill sign for a man to lose his stomach; but though it be a sign of the decay



of grace to lose the spiritual appetite; yet it is a sign of the truth of grace to bewail the loss; it is sad to lose our first love, but it is happy when we mourn for the loss of our first love.

*Ans. 2.* If thou hast not that appetite, after heavenly things as formerly, yet be not discouraged, for in the use of means thou mayest recover thine appetite the ordinances are for recovering of the appetite when it is lost; in other cases feeding takes away the stomach, but here, feeding on an ordinance begets a stomach.

## SECT. 6.

*Containing a Persuasion to Spiritual Hunger.*

*Use. 5. Exhort.* It exhorts us all to labour after this spiritual hunger. Hunger less after the world, and more after righteousness; say concerning spiritual things, 'Lord, evermore give me this bread;' Feed me with this angel's food. That manna is most to be hungered after, which will not only preserve life, but prevent death, John vi. 50. that is most desirable which is most durable. Riches are not for ever, Prov. xxviii. 24. but righteousness is for ever, Prov. viii. 18. The beauty of holiness never fades; the robe of righteousness never waxeth old, Psal. cx. 3. Isa. lxi. 12. O hunger after that righteousness which delivereth from death, Prov. x. 2. This is the righteousness which God himself is in love with, Prov. xv. 9. 'He loveth him that followeth after righteousness.' All men are ambitious of the king's favour; alas! what is a prince's smile but a transient beatitude? This sunshine of his royal countenance soon masks itself with a cloud of displeasure; but thou who art endued with righteousness, art God's favourite, and how sweet is his smile! Psal. lxxiii. 3. 'Thy loving kindness is better than life.'

SECT. 7.

*Containing an Excitation to spiritual Hunger.*

To persuade men to hunger after this righteousness consider two things.

1. Unless we hunger after righteousness, we cannot obtain it; God will never throw away his blessings upon them that do not desire them. If a king shall say to a rebel, Do but desire a pardon, and thou shalt have it; if, through pride and stubbornness he disdains to sue out his pardon, he deserves to die. God hath set spiritual blessings at a low rate, do but hunger, and you shall have righteousness; but if we refuse to come up to these terms, there is no righteousness to be had for us. God will stop the current of his mercy, and set open the sluice of his indignation.

2. If we do not thirst here, we shall thirst when it is too late; if we do not thirst as David did, Ps. xlii. 2. 'My soul thirsteth for God,' we shall thirst as Dives did for a drop of water, Luke xvi. 24. They who thirst not for righteousness, shall be in perpetual hunger and thirst; they shall thirst for mercy, but no mercy to be had. Heat increaseth thirst; when men shall burn in hell, and be scorched with the flames of God's wrath, this heat will increase their thirst for mercy, but there will be nothing to allay their thirst. O is it not better to thirst for righteousness while it is to be had, than to thirst for mercy when there is none to be had? Sinners, the time is shortly coming when the draw-bridge of mercy will be quite pulled up.

I shall next briefly prescribe some helps to spiritual hunger.

1. Avoid those things which will hinder your ap-

petite. As, 1. Windy things. When the stomach is full of wind, a man hath little appetite to his food ; so, when one is filled with a windy opinion of his own righteousness, he will not hunger after Christ's righteousness : he who being puffed up with pride, thinks he hath grace enough already, will not hunger after more ; these windy vapours spoil the stomach. 2. Sweet things destroy the appetite ; so, by feeding immoderately upon the sweet, luscious delights of the world, we lose our appetite to Christ and grace. You never knew a man surfeit himself upon the world, and sick of love to Christ ; while Israel fed with delight upon garlic and onions, they never hungered after manna ; the soul cannot be carried to two extremes at once ; as the eye cannot look intent on heaven and earth at once, so a man cannot at the same instant hunger excessively after the world, and righteousness ; the earth puts out the fire ; the love of earthly things will quench the desire of spiritual, 1 John ii. 15. ' Love not the world,' the sin is not in the having, but in the loving.

2. Do all that may provoke spiritual appetite. There are two things provoke appetite. 1. Exercise ; a man by walking and stirring gets a stomach to his meat ; so, by the exercise of holy duties, the spiritual appetite is increased, 1 Tim. iv. 7. ' Exercise thyself to godliness.' Many have left off closet-prayer ; they hear the word but seldom, and for want of exercise they have lost their stomach to religion. 2. Sauce ; sauce whets and sharpens the appetite ; there is a twofold sauce provokes holy appetite. 1. The bitter herbs of repentance ; he that tastes the gall and vinegar in sin, hungers after the body and blood of the Lord. 2. Affliction ; God oft gives us this sauce to sharpen our hunger after grace ; Reuben found mandrakes in the field, Gen. xxx. 14. The mandrakes are an herb of a very strong savour, and among other virtues they have, they are chiefly

medicinal for those who have but weak stomachs. Afflictions may be compared to these mandrakes which do sharpen men's desires after that spiritual food, which, in time of prosperity, they began to loath and nauseate: penury is the sauce which cures the surfeit of plenty. In sickness people hunger more after righteousness than in health; 'The full soul loathes the honey-comb;' Christians, when full fed, despise the rich cordials of the gospel. I wish we do not slight those truths now, which would taste sweet in a prison; how precious was a leaf of the Bible in queen Mary's days! The wise God sees it good sometimes to give us the sharp sauce of affliction, to make us feed more hungrily upon the bread of life. And so much for the first part of the text, 'Blessed are they that hunger.'



MATT. v. 6. *For they shall be filled.*

## CHAP. XV.

*Shewing that the Spiritual Hunger shall be satisfied.*

**I** Proceed now to the second part of the text, a promise annexed, 'They shall be filled.' A Christian fighting with sin is not like one that beats the air, 1 Cor. ix. 26. and his hungering after righteousness is not like one that sucks in only air, 'Blessed are they that hunger, for they shall be filled.'

*Doct.* Those that hunger after righteousness shall be filled; God never bids us seek him in vain, here is an honey-comb dropping into the mouths of the hungry, 'They shall be filled.' Luke i. 35. 'He hath filled the hungry with good things.' Psal. cix. 9. 'He satisfieth the longing soul.' God will not let us lose our longing; here is the excellency of righteousness above all things: a man may hunger

after the world, and not be filled; the world is fading, not filling; cast three worlds into the heart, yet the heart is not full; but righteousness is a filling thing, nay, it so fills, as it satisfies; a man may be filled, and not satisfied; a sinner may take his full of sin, but that is a sad filling, it is far from satisfaction, Prov. xiv. 14. 'The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways;' he shall have his belly full of sin, he shall have enough of it; but this is not a filling to satisfaction, this is such a filling as the damned in hell have, they shall be full of the fury of the Lord; but he that hungers after righteousness, shall be satisfyingly filled. Jer. xxxi. 14. 'My people shall be satisfied with goodness.' Psal. lxiii. 5. 'My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow.' Joseph first opened the mouths of the sacks, and then filled them with corn, and put money in them, Gen. xlii. 25. So God first opens the mouth with desire, and then fills it with good things, Psal. lxxxix. 10.—For the illustration of this, consider these three things.

1. That God can fill the hungry soul. 2. Why he fills the hungry soul. 3. How he fills the hungry soul.

1. That God can fill the hungry soul; he is called a fountain. Psal. xxxvi. 9. 'With thee is the fountain of life;' the cistern may be empty, and cannot fill us: creatures are oft broken cisterns, Jer. ii. 13. But the fountain is filling; God is a fountain; if we bring the vessels of our desires to this fountain, he is able to fill them; the fulness of God is, 1. An infinite fulness; though he fill us, and the angels which have larger capacities to receive, yet he hath never the less himself; as the sun, though it shines, hath never the less light. Luke viii. 46. 'I perceive that virtue is gone out of me.' Though God lets virtue go out of him, yet he hath never the less: the fulness of the creature

is limited; it ariseth to such a degree and proportion, but God's fulness is infinite; as it hath its resplendency, so its redundancy, it knows neither bounds nor bottom.

2. It is a constant fulness? The fulness of the creature is a mutable fulness, it ebbs and changeth. I could, saith one, have helped you, but now my estate is low; the blossoms of the fig-tree, are soon blown off; creatures cannot do that for us which once they could; but God is a constant fulness, Psal. cii. 27. 'Thou art the same:' God can never be exhausted, his fulness is overflowing and ever-flowing, then surely 'it is good to draw nigh to God,' Psal. lxxii. 28. It is good bringing our yessels to this spring-head, it is a never failing goodness.

2. Why God doth fill the hungry soul. The reasons are:

1. God will fill the hungry soul out of his tender compassion; he knows else 'The spirit would fail before him, and the soul which he hath made.' Isa. lviii. 16. If the hungry man be not satisfied with food, he dies; God hath more bowels than to suffer an hungry man to be famished; when the multitude had nothing to eat, Christ was moved with compassion, and he wrought a miracle for their supply: Matth. xv. 32. Much more will he compassionate such as 'hunger and thirst after righteousness;' when a poor sinner sees himself almost starved in his sins, (as the prodigal among his husks) and begins to hunger after Christ, saying, 'There is bread enough in my Father's house;' God will then, out of his infinite compassions, bring forth the fatted calf, and refresh this soul with the delicacies and provisions of the gospel; oh the melting of God's bowels to an hungry sinner! Hos. xi. 8. 'My heart is turned within me, my repetitions are kindled.' We cannot see a poor creature

at the door ready to perish with hunger, but our bowels begin to relent, and we afford them some relief; and will the Father of mercies let a poor soul that hungers after the blessings of the gospel go away without an alms of free grace? no, he will not, he cannot; let the hungry sinner think thus, though I am full of wants, yet my God is full of bowels.

2. God will fill the hungry that he may fulfil his word, Psal. cvii. 9. Jer. xli. 14. Luke vi. 21. 'Blessed are ye that hunger now, for ye shall be filled.' Isa. xliv. 3. 'I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed,' &c. Hath the Lord spoken, and shall it not come to pass? promises are obligatory; if God hath passed a promise, he cannot go back: thou that hungerest after righteousness, hast God engaged for thee; he hath (to speak with reverence) pawned his truth for thee. As 'his compassions fail not,' Lam. iii. 22. so 'he will not suffer his faithfulness to fail,' Psal. lxxxix. 33. If the hungry soul should not be filled, the promise should not be fulfilled.

3. God will fill the hungry soul, because he himself hath excited and stirred up this hunger; he plants holy desires in us, and will not he satisfy those desires which he himself hath wrought in us? as in case of prayer, when God prepares the heart to pray, he prepares his ear to hear, Psal. x. 17. so in case of spiritual hunger, when God prepares the heart to hunger, he will prepare his hand to fill; it is not rational to imagine that God should deny to satisfy that hunger which he himself hath caused: nature doth nothing in vain: Should the Lord inflame the desire after righteousness, and not fill it, he might seem to do something in vain.

4. God will fill the hungry, from those sweet relations he stands in to them; they are his children; we cannot deny our children when they are hung-

ry, we will rather spare it from ourselves, Luke xi. 13. When he that is born of God, shall come and say, Father, I hunger, give me Christ; Father, I thirst, refresh me with the living streams of the Spirit, can God deny? Doth God hear the raven when it cries, and will he not hear the righteous when they cry? When the earth opens its mouth and thirsts, God doth satisfy it, Psal. lxxv. 9, 10. Doth the Lord satisfy the thirsty earth with showers, and will he not satisfy the thirsty soul with grace?

5. God will satisfy the hungry, because the hungry soul is most thankful for mercy; when the restless desire hath been drawn out after God, and God fills it, how thankful is a Christian! The Lord loves to bestow his mercy where he may have most praise; we delight to give to them that are thankful: musicians love to play where there is the best sound; God loves to bestow his mercies where he may hear of them again: The hungry soul sets the crown of praise upon the head of free grace, Psal. l. 23. 'whoso offereth praise, glorifieth me.'

6. How God fills the hungry soul.

Ans. There is a threefold filling.

1. With grace. 2. With peace. 3. With bliss.

1. God fills the hungry soul with grace: grace is filling, because suitable to the soul. 'Stephen, full of the Holy Ghost,' Acts vii. 55. This fulness of grace is in respect of parts, not of degrees. There is something of every grace, though not perfection in any grace.

2. God fills the hungry soul with peace, Rom. xv. 13. 'The God of hope fill you with joy and peace;' this flows from Christ. Israel had honey out of the rock; this honey of peace comes out of the rock Christ, John xvi. ult. 'That in me ye might have peace.' So filling is this peace, that it sets the soul a longing after heaven; this cluster



of grapes quickens the appetite and pursuit after the full crop.

13. God fills the hungry soul with bliss: glory is a filling thing; Psal. xvii. ult. 'When I awake, I shall be satisfied with thy image.' When a Christian awakes out of the sleep of death, then he shall be satisfied, having the glorious beams of God's image shining upon him; then shall the soul be filled brimful; the glory of heaven is so sweet, that the soul shall still thirst; yet so infinite, that it shall be filled.

*Use.* What an encouragement is this to hunger after righteousness! such shall be filled: God chargeth to fill the hungry, Isa. lviii. 10. He blames those who do not fill the hungry, Isa. xxxii. 6. And do we think he will be slack in that which he blames us for not doing? Oh come with hungerings after Christ, and be assured of satisfaction. God keeps open house for hungry sinners; he invites his guests, and bids them come without money, Isa. lv. 1, 2. God's nature inclines him, and his promise obligeth him to fill the hungry. Consider, why did Christ 'receive the Spirit without measure?' John iii. 34. It was not for himself; he was infinitely full before: but he was filled with the holy unction for this end, that he might distil his grace upon the hungry soul. Art thou ignorant; Christ was filled with wisdom that he might teach thee. Art thou polluted? Christ was filled with grace that he might cleanse thee: shall not the soul then come to Christ, who was filled on purpose to fill the hungry? we love to knock at a rich man's door; in our Father's house there is bread; come with desire, and you shall go away with comfort; you shall have the virtues of Christ's blood, the influences of his Spirit, the communications of his love.

Here are two objections made against this.

*Obj.* 1. The carnal man's objection: I have, saith he, hungered after righteousness, yet am not filled.

*Ans.* 1. Thou sayest thou hungerest, and art not satisfied; perhaps God is not satisfied with thy hunger; thou hast opened thy mouth wide, Psalm lxxxi. 10. but hast not opened thine ear, Psalm xl. 9. when God hath called thee to family prayer, and mortification of sin, thou hast, like the deaf adder, stopped thine ear against God, Zech. vii. 11. No wonder then thou hast not that comfortable filling as thou desirest; though thou hast opened thy month, yet thou hast stopped thine ear; the child that will not hear his parent, is made to do penance by fasting.

2. Perhaps thou thirstest as much after a temptation as after righteousness: at a sacrament thou seemest to be inflamed with desire after Christ; but the next temptation that comes, either to drunkenness or lasciviousness, thou fallest in, and closest with the temptation. Satan doth but beckon to thee, and thou comest; thou openest faster to the tempter than to Christ; and dost thou wonder thou art not filled with the fat things of God's house?

3. Perhaps thou hungerest more after the world than after righteousness: the young man in the gospel would have Christ, but the world lay nearer his heart than Christ; hypocrites pant more after the dust of the earth than the water of life. Israel had no manna while their dough lasted; such as feed immoderately on the dough of earthly things, must not think to be filled with manna from heaven; if your money be your god, never look to receive another God in the sacrament.

*Obj.* 2. The godly man's objection; I have had unfeigned desires after God, but am not filled.

*Ans.* 1. Thou mayest have a filling of grace, though not of comfort; if God doth not fill thee with gladness, yet with goodness, Psal. cvii. 11. Look into

thy heart and see the distillations of the Spirit; the dew may fall, though the honey-comb doth not drop.

2. Wait a while and thou shalt be filled; the gospel is a spiritual banquet, it feasts the soul with grace and comfort; none eat of this banquet but such as wait at the table, Isa. xxv. 6, 9. 'In this mountain shall the Lord of Hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees well refined; and it shall be said in that day, 'Lo, this is our God, we have waited for him; we will be glad, and rejoice in his salvation.' Spiritual mercies are not only worth desiring, but waiting for.

3. If God should not fill his people to satisfaction here, yet they shall be filled in heaven; the vessels of their desires shall be filled, as those water-pots, John ii. up to the brim.

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MATT. v. 7. *Blessed are the Merciful, for they shall obtain Mercy.*

## CHAP. XV.

*Containing a discourse of Mercifulness.*

THESE verses, like the stairs of Solomon's temple, cause our ascent to the Holy of holies. We are now mounting up a step higher, 'Blessed are the merciful,' &c. There was never more need to preach of mercifulness than in these unmerciful times wherein we live. It is reported in the life of Chrysostom, that he did much preach on this subject of mercifulness, and for his much pressing Christians to mercy, he was called of many the Alms-preacher, or the preacher for mercy; our times need many Chrysostoms.

‘Blessed are the merciful.’ Mercy stands both in the van and rear of the text; in the beginning of the text it stands as a Duty; in the end of the text it stands as a Reward. The Hebrew word for godly signifies merciful; the more godly, the more merciful; the doctrine I shall gather out of the words, which will comprehend and draw in the whole, is this;

*Doct.* That the merciful man is a blessed man; as there is a curse hangs over the head of the unmerciful man, Psal. cix. 6, 7, 8, 9, &c. ‘Let Satan stand at his right hand; when he shall be judged, let him be condemned, and let his prayer become sin? Let his children be fatherless, and his wife a widow; let his children be continually vagabonds; and beg; let the extortioner catch all that he hath, and let the stranger spoil his labour; let there be none to extend mercy to him; let his posterity be cut off, and in the generation following let their name be blotted out; let the iniquities of his fathers be remembered with the Lord, and let not the sin of his mother be blotted out.’ Why, what is this crime? ver. 16. ‘Because he remembered not to shew mercy,’ &c. See what a long vial full of the plagues of God is poured out upon the unmerciful man? so by the rule of contraries, the blessings of the Almighty do crown and encompass the merciful man, 2 Sam. xxii. 26. Psal. xxxvii. 26. Psal. xli. 1. ‘The merciful man is a blessed man.’ For the illustrating this, I shall shew,

1. What is meant by mercifulness. 2. The several kinds of mercy.

1. What is meant by mercifulness? I answer, it is a melting disposition, whereby we lay to heart the miseries of others, and are ready on all occasions to be instrumental for their good.

*Quest.* 1. How do mercy and love differ?

*Ans.* In some things they agree, in some things they differ; like waters that may have two different

spring-heads, but meet in the stream. Love and mercy differ thus; love is more extensive; the diocese that love walks and visits in, is larger: mercy properly respects them that are miserable; love is of a larger consideration; love is like a friend that visits them that are well; mercy is like a physician that visits only them that are sick. Again, love acts more out of affection; mercy acts out of a principle of conscience; mercy lends its help to another, love gives its heart to another: thus they differ; but love and mercy agree in this, they are both ready to do good offices; both of them hath sounding of bowels, and healing under their wings.

*Quest. 2.* Whence doth mercy spring?

*Ans.* Its spring-head riseth higher than nature; mercy taken in its full latitude; proceeds from a work of grace in the heart; naturally we are far enough from mercy; the sinner is a bramble, not a fig-tree yielding sweet fruit: it is the character and stigma of a natural man, unmerciful, Rom. i. 31. A wicked man, like Jehoram, hath his bowels fallen out, 2 Chron. xxi. 19. Therefore he is compared to an adamant, Zech. vii. xii. because his heart melts not in mercy. Before conversion the sinner is compared to a wolf for his savageness, to a lion for his fierceness, to a bee for his sting, Psal. cxviii. 12. to an adder for his poison, Psal. cxi. 3. By nature we do not send forth oil, but poison; not the oil of mercifulness, but the poison of maliciousness.

Besides that inbred unmercifulness which is in us, there is something infused too by satan; 'The prince of the air works in men,' Eph. ii. 2. He is a fierce spirit, therefore called the red dragon, Rev. xii. 18. And if he possesseth men, no wonder if they are implacable, and without mercy; what mercy can be expected from hell? so that if the heart be tuned into mercifulness, it is from the change that

grace hath made : when the sun shines, then the ice melts ; when the Sun of Righteousness once shines with beams of grace upon the soul, now it melts in mercy and tenderness ; thou must first be a new man, before a merciful man ; thou canst not help a member of Christ, till first thou thyself art a member.

2. The several kinds of mercy, or how many ways a man may be said to be merciful. Mercy is a fountain that runs in five streams ; we must be merciful, 1. To the souls of others. 2. To their names. 3. To their estates. 4. To their offences. 5. To their wants.

SECT. 1.

*Shewing that Mercy is to be extended to the Souls of others.*

1. We must be merciful to the souls of others ; this is a spiritual alms. Indeed soul-mercy is the chief ; the soul is the most precious thing ; it is a vessel of honour, it is a bud of eternity, it is a spark lighted by the breath of God : it is a rich diamond set in a ring of clay ; the soul hath the blood of God to redeem it, the image of God to beautify it ; it being therefore of so high a descent, sprung from the Ancient of Days, that mercy which is shewn to the soul, must needs be the greatest. This soul-mercy to others stands in four things :

1. In pitying them. If I weep saith Austin, for that body from which the soul is departed, how should I weep for that soul from which God is departed ? had we seen that man in the gospel cutting himself with stones, and fetching blood of himself, it would have moved our pity, Mark v. 5. To see a sinner stabbing himself, and having his hands imbrued in his own blood, should cause relentings in our bowels ; our eye should affect our heart : God

was angry with Edom, because he 'did cast off all pity,' Amos i. 11.

2. Soul-mercy is in advising and exhorting sinners : tell them in what a sad condition they are, in the gall of bitterness. Shew them their danger, they tread upon the banks of the bottomless pit; if death gives them a jog, they tumble in; and we must dip our words in honey, use all the mildness we can, 2 Tim. ii. 25. 'In Meekness instructing,' &c. Fire melts, ointment molifies; words of love may melt hard hearts into repentance; this is soul-mercy : God made a law, Exod. xxiii. 5. that whosoever did 'see his enemy's ass lying under a burden, he should help him.' On which words saith Chrysostom, We will help a beast that is fallen under a burden, and shall we not extend relief to those who are fallen under a worse burden of sin?

3. Soul-mercy is in reproving refractory sinners; there is a cruel mercy, when we are sharp against men's sins, and will not let them go to hell quietly. Lev. xix. 17. 'Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart; thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him.' Fond pity is no better than cruelty, Tit. i. 18. 'Rebuke him sharply;' [Greek] cuttingly : the surgeon cuts and lanceth the flesh, but it is in order to a cure, they are healing wounds; so by a cutting reproof, when we lance mens' consciences, and let out the blood of sin, we exercise spiritual surgery, this is shewing mercy, Jude xxiii. 'Others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire.' If a man were in the fire, though you did hurt him a little in pulling him out, he would be thankful, and take it as a kindness. Some men, when we tell them of sin, say, O this is bitterness; no, it is shewing mercy. If a man's house were on fire, and another should see it, and not tell him of it for fear of awaking him, were not this cruelty? When we see others sleeping the sleep of

death, and the fire of God's wrath ready to burn about their ears, and we are silent, is not this to be accessory to their death?

4. Soul-mercy is in praying for others. This is like physic used in a desperate case, and oft it recovers the sick patient, James v. 16. 'The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much;' as it cures the sick body, so the sin-sick soul. There is a story of one who gave his soul to the devil, who was given in to the prayers of Luther. When Eutychus fell down from a high loft, and was taken up dead, Paul fell on him, that is, he did effectually pray over him, and he prayed him alive, Acts xx. 9, 11. By sin the soul is fallen from an high loft, viz. a state of innocency; now, fervent prayer oft-times fetcheth life in such a dead soul.

*Use 1.* See what a blessed work the work of the ministry is! The preaching of the word is nothing but shewing mercy to souls: This is a mighty and glorious engine in the hand of the Lord of Hosts for the beating down of the devil's strong holds. The ministry of the word doth not only bring light with it, but eye-salve, anointing the eyes to see that light. It is a sin-killing, and a soul quickening ordinance, it is 'the power of God to salvation.' What enemies are they to their own souls that oppugn the ministry? They say, the people that live under the line, curse the sun, and are glad when the sun sets, because of its burning heat. Foolish sinners curse the sun-rising of the ministry, and are offended at the light of it, because it comes near their sins, and scorseth their consciences, though in the end it saves their souls.

*Use 2. Reproof.* It reproves them that have no mercy to souls.

1. Evil Magistrates. 2. Evil Ministers.

1. Evil Magistrates, who either 'take away the key of knowledge,' Luke xi. 52. or give a tolera-



tion to wickedness; suffering men to sin by a license. The meaning of Toleration is this, if men will to hell, none shall stop them. Is not nature enough poisoned? Do not men sin fast enough, but must they have such political engines as screw them up higher in wickedness? Must they have such favourable gales from the breath of great ones as serve to carry them full sail to the devil? This is far from soul-mercy. What an heavy reckoning will these Statists have in the day of the Lord!

2. Evil Ministers. 1. Such as have no bowels to the souls of their people; they do not pity them, pray for them: they seek not them, but theirs: they preach not for love, but lucre: their care is more for tythes than souls. How can they be called spiritual fathers who are without bowels? These are mercenaries, not ministers.

2. Such as feed not the souls of their people with solid truths. When Christ sent out his apostles, he gave them their text, and tells them what they must preach, Matt. x. 7. 'Preach, saying the kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Upon which place, saith Luther, the ministers of Christ must preach 'things that pertain to the kingdom of God:' pardon of sin, sanctification, living by faith. They are unmerciful to souls, who, instead of breaking the bread of life, fill their people's heads with airy speculations and notions; who rather tickle the fancy than touch the conscience, and give precious souls rather music than food

3. Such as darken knowledge with words, and preach so as if they were speaking in an unknown tongue. Some ministers love to soar aloft, like the eagle, and fly above their people's capacities, endeavouring rather to be admired than understood. They are like some crabbed authors, which cannot be read without a comment. Indeed God calls his ministers ambassadors, 2 Cor. v. 20. but they

must not be like those outlandish ambassadors, that cannot be understood without an interpreter. It is unmercifulness to souls to preach so as not to be understood. Ministers should be stars to give light, not clouds to obscure the truth. Saint Paul was learned, yet plain. Clearness and perspicuity is the grace of speech. It is cruelty to souls when we go about to make easy things hard; this many are guilty of in our age, who go into the pulpit only to tie knots; and think it their glory to amuse the people; this savours more of pride than mercifulness.

4. Such as see others going on in sin, but do not tell them of it. When men declare their sin as Sodom, it is the minister's duty to 'lift up his voice like a trumpet, and shew the house of Jacob their sin,' Isa. lviii. 1. Zeal in the ministry, is as proper as fire on the altar; he who lets another sin, and holds his peace, is a man-slayer. That centinel deserves death, who sees the enemy approaching, and gives not warning, Ezek. iii. 20.

5. Such as poison souls with error; how dangerous is the leprosy of the head! a frenzy is worse than a fever; what shall we say to such ministers as give poison to their people in a golden cup? are not these unmerciful? others there are, (unworthy the name of ministers; itineraries, the devil's journeymen,) who ride up and down, and with sathan, compass the earth, to devour souls; it would pity one's heart to see poor unstable creatures misled by rude and illiterate men, who diet the people with blasphemy and nonsense, and make them fitter for Bedlam, than the New Jerusalem; all these are unmerciful to souls.

Let me beseech all that fear God, to shew soul-mercy. Strengthen the weak, reduce the wandering, raise up them that are fallen, James v. 20. 'He

that converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death.'

## SECT. 2.

*Shewing that Christians must be tender of one another's Names.*

2. We must be merciful to the names of others. A good name is one of the greatest blessings upon earth: no chain of pearl doth so adorn as this; it being so, we ought to be very tender of names. They are to be counted in an high degree unmerciful, who make no conscience of taking away the good names of their brethren. Their throats are open sepulchres to bury the fame and renown of men, Rom. iii. 13. It is a great cruelty to murder a man in his name, Cant. v. 7. 'The keepers of the wall took away my veil from me;' some expositors interpret it of her honour and fame, which did cover her as a beautiful veil. The ground of this unmercifulness to name, is,

1. Pride. Pride is such a thing as cannot endure to be outshined; it loves not to see itself exceeded in parts and eminency; therefore will behead another in his good name, that he may appear something lower: The proud man will be pulling down of others in their reputation, and so by their eclipse he thinks he shall shine the brighter; the breath of a proud man causeth a blast or mildew upon fame.

2. Envy. 1 Pet. ii. 1. An envious man maligns the dignity of another, therefore seeks to mischief him in his name: religion teaches us to rejoice in the esteem and fame of others, Rom. i. 8. 'I thank my God for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world;' [Gr.] it is divulged with fame. A good report is a credit to religion,

Heb. xi. 4. If persons professing godliness have not a good name, religion will have no very good name; but envy, consulting with the devil, lays a train, and fetches fire from hell to blow up the good name of another.

*Quest.* How many ways may we be unmerciful to the names of others?

*Ans.* Divers ways : 1. By misreporting them, a sin forbidden, Exod. xxiii. 1. 'Thou shalt not raise a false report.' Eminency is commonly blasted by slander, Psal. lxiv. 3. 'Their tongues are as arrows shot out.' The tongue of a slanderer shoots out words to wound the fame of another, and make it bleed to death : The saints of God in all ages have met with unmerciful men, who have fathered things upon them that they have not been guilty of. Surrius the jesuit reported of Luther, that he learned his divinity of the devil, and that he died drunk ; but Melancthon, who wrote his life, affirms that he died in a most pious, holy manner, and made a most excellent prayer before his death : It was David's complaint, Psal. xxxv. 11. 'They laid to my charge things which I knew not.' The Greek word for devil signifies slanderer, 1 Tim. iii. 11. 'Not slanderers;' in the Greek it is, not devils. Some think it is no great matter to defame and traduce another ; but know this is to act the part of a devil. O how many unmerciful men are there, who indeed go for Christians, but play the devil in venting their lies and calumnies ! wicked men in scripture are called dogs, Psal. xxii. 16. Slanderers are not like those dogs which licked Lazarus's sores to heal them ; but like the dogs which did eat Jezebel, they rend and tear the precious names of men. Valentinian the emperor did decree, that he who was openly convicted of this crime of slander, should die for it : And pope Gregory did decree, that such a person should be excommunicated, and not have the

communion given him; I think it was a just decree.

2. We are unmerciful to the names of others when we receive a slander, and then report what we hear, Lev. xix. 16. 'Thou shalt not go up and down as a tale-bearer among thy people.' A good man 'doth not evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour,' Psal. xv. 3. We must not only not raise a false report, but not take it up. To divulge a report before we speak with the party and know the truth of it, is unmercifulness, and cannot acquit itself of sin. The same word in the Hebrew, to raise a slander, signifies to receive it, Exod. xxiii. 1. The receiver is even as bad as the thief; it is well if none of us have, in this sense, received stolen goods; when others have stolen away the good names of their brethren, have not we received the stolen goods? there would not be so many to broach false rumours, but that they see this liquor pleaseth other men's taste.

3. We deal unmercifully with the names of others when we diminish from their just worth and dignity; when we make more of their infirmities, and less of their virtues, James iv. 11. 'Speak not evil of one another.' I have read a story of one Idor an abbot, that he was never heard to speak evil of any man. Saint Austin could not endure that any should eclipse and lessen the fame of others; therefore wrote those two verses upon his table.

Whosoever loves another's name to blast,

This table is not for him, let him fast.

Wicked men are still paring off the credit of their neighbours, and they make thick parings; they pare off all that is good; nothing is left but the Core, something that may tend to their disparagement. Unmerciful men know how to boil a quart to a pint; they have a devilish art so to extenuate and lessen the merit of others, that it is even boiled

away to nothing. Some, though they have not the power of creation, yet they have the power of annihilation. They can sooner annihilate the good which is in others, than imitate it.

4. We are unmerciful to the names of others, when we know them to be calumniated, yet do not vindicate them. A man may sometimes as well wrong another by silence as slander; he who is merciful to his brother, is an advocate to plead in his behalf when he is injuriously traduced; when the apostles, who were filled with the wine of the Spirit, were charged with drunkenness, Peter vindicated them openly, Acts ii. 15. A merciful man will take the dead fly out of the box of ointment.

5. They are in an high degree unmerciful to the names of others, who bear false witness against them, Psal. xxvii. 11. Exod. xxiii. 1. 'Put not thy hand with the wicked to be a false witness.' Putting the hand, is taking an oath falsely; as when a man puts his hand upon the book and swears to a lie; so Tostatus expounds it; this false witness is a two-edged sword; the party forsworn wounds another's name, and his own soul. A false witness is compared to a maul or hammer, Prov. xxv. 18. It is true in this sense because he is hardened, 1. In impudence; he blusheth at nothing. 2. In unmercifulness: there is no softness in a maul or hammer, nor is there any relenting, or bowels to be found in a false witness. All these ways men are unmerciful to the names of others.

*Use Exhort.* Let me persuade all Christians, as they make conscience of religion, so to shew mercy to the names of others; be very chary and tender of men's good name: consider,

1. What a sin is it to defame any man, Tit. iii.
2. 1 Pet. ii. 1. 'Laying aside all envyings and evil speakings;' envy and evil speaking are put together; laying aside, putting away, as a man would put

away a thing from him with indignation; as Paul shook off the viper, Acts xxviii. 5.

2. The injuriousness of it; thou that takest away the good name of another, woundest him in that which is most dear to him; better take away a man's life than his name; by eclipsing his name thou buriest him alive; it is an irreparable injury. A wound in the name is like a flaw in a diamond, or a stain in azure, which will never work out; no physician can heal the wounds of the tongue.

3. God will require it at mens' hands; if idle words must be accounted for, shall not reproachful slanders? God will make inquisition one day as well for names as for blood. Let all this persuade to caution and circumspection; you would be loath to steal the goods of others; a man's name is of more worth; and he that takes away the good name of another, doth sin more than if he had taken the corn out of his field, or the wares out of his shop.

Especially, take heed of wounding the names of the godly: God hath set a crown of honour on their head, and will you take it off? Numb. xii. 8. 'Wherefore then were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses? to defame the saints, is no less than the defaming God himself, they having his picture drawn upon them, and being members of Christ. Oh think how ill Christ will take this at your hand another day; it was under the old law a sin to defame a virgin, and what is it to calumniate Christ's spouse? are the names of the saints written in heaven, and will you blot them out upon earth? be merciful to the names of others.

SECT. 3.

*Mercy in some cases to be extended to the Estates of Others, and that Christians must not take the summum jus.*

3. Be merciful to the estates of others. If a man be thy debtor, and providence hath frowned upon him, that he hath not wherewithal to pay, do not crush him when he is sinking, but remit something of the rigour of the law; ‘Blessed are the merciful.’ The wicked are compared to beasts of prey, that live upon rapine and spoil, they care not what mischief they do, Psal. x. 9. ‘He lieth in wait secretly, as a lion in his den, he doth catch the poor, when he draweth him into his net.’ Chrysostom saith, the drawing into the net is, when the rich draw the poor into bonds, and in case of non-payment at the day, the bond being forfeited, seize upon all they have; it is not justice, but cruelty, when others lie at our mercy, to be like that hard-hearted creditor in the gospel, who took his debtor ‘By the throat, saying, pay me what thou owest,’ Matt. xviii. 28. God made a law, Deut. xxiv. 6. ‘No man shall take the nether nor the upper millstone to pledge, for he taketh a man’s life to pledge.’ If a man had lent another money, he must not take both his millstones for a pawn; he must shew mercy, and leave the man something to get a livelihood with; we should in this imitate God, who ‘in the midst of anger remembers mercy.’ God doth not take the extremity of the law upon us; but when we have not to pay, if we confess the debt, he freely forgives, Prov. xxviii. 13. Matth. xviii. 27.

Not but that we may justly seek what is our own; but if others be brought low, and submit, we ought



in conscience to remit something of the debt.  
'Blessed are the merciful.'

#### SECT. 4.

*Shewing that Christians must be merciful to the  
Offences of others.*

4. We must be merciful to the offences of others, be ready to shew mercy to them that have injured you. Thus Stephen the proto-martyr, Acts vii. 60. 'He kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.' When he prayed for himself, he stood; but when he came to pray for his enemies, he kneeled down; to shew, saith Bernard, his earnestness in prayer, and how greatly he desired that God would forgive them; this is a rare kind of mercy, Prov. xix. 11. 'It is a man's glory to pass over a transgression.' Mercy in forgiving injuries, as it is the touchstone, so the crown of Christianity; bishop Cranmer was of a merciful disposition; if any who had wronged him came to desire a courtesy of him, he would do all that lay in his power for him; insomuch that it grew to a proverb, Do Cranmer an injury, and he will be your friend as long as he lives. To overcome evil with good, and answer malice with mercy, is truly heroical, and renders religion glorious in the eyes of all; but I wave this, and proceed.

#### SECT. 5.

*That mercy must be extended to the supplying the  
wants of others.*

We must be merciful to the wants of others. This the text chiefly intends; a good man doth not, like the snake, twist within himself; his mo-

tion is direct, not circular : 'He is ever merciful and lendeth,' Psal. xxxvii. 26. This merciful charity to the wants of others, stands in three things.

1. A judicious consideration, Psal. xli. 1. 'Blessed is he that considereth the poor : ' and you must consider four things.

1. It might have been your own case ; you yourselves might have stood in need of another's charity, and then how welcome and refreshing would those streams have been to you ?

2. Consider how sad a condition poverty is. Tho' Chrysostom calls poverty the high way to heaven ; he that keeps this road, will go weeping thither. Consider the poor, behold their tears, their sighs, their dying groans ; look upon the deep furrows made in their faces, and consider if there be not reason why you should scatter your seed of mercy in these furrows ? the poor man feeds upon sorrow, he drinks tears, Psal. lxxx. 58. like Jacob, in a windy night he hath the clouds for his canopy, and a stone for his pillow.

Nay farther, consider, that oftentimes poverty becomes not only a cross, but a snare ; it exposeth to much evil, which made Agur pray, ' Give me not poverty,' Prov. xxx. 8. want puts men upon indirect courses. The poor will venture their souls for money ; which is like throwing diamonds at pear trees : If the rich would wisely consider this, their alms might prevent much sin.

3. Consider why the wise God hath suffered an inequality in the world : it is for this very reason, because he would have mercy exercised. If all were rich, there were no need of alms, nor could the merciful man have been so well known. If he that travelled to Jericho had not been wounded, and left half dead, the good Samaritan, who poured oil and wine into his wounds, had not been known.

4. Consider, how quickly the balance of Provi-

dence may turn : we ourselves may be brought to poverty, and then it will be no small comfort to us that we relieved others, while we were in a capacity to do it. Eccl. xi. 2. ' Give a portion to seven, and also to eight for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth.' We cannot promise ourselves always halcyon days ? God knows how soon any of us may change our pasture ; the cup which now runs over with wine, may be filled with the waters of Marah, Ruth i. 21. ' I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty.' How many have we seen like Bajazet and Belisarius, invested with great lordships and possessions, who have on a sudden brought their manor to a morsel ? So that it is wisdom, in this sense, to consider the wants of others. Remember how soon the scene may alter ; we may be put in the poor's dress ; and if adversity come, it will be no trouble of mind to us to think that while we had an estate we did lay it out upon Christ's indigent members ; this is the first thing in mercifulness, a judicious consideration.

2. A tender commiseration, Isa. lviii. 10. ' If thou draw out thy soul to the hungry.' Bounty begins in pity ; the Hebrew word for mercy signifies bowels. Christ first had ' compassion on the multitude,' then he wrought a miracle to feed them, Matt. xv. 32. Charity which wants compassion is brutish. The brute creatures can relieve us many ways, but cannot pity us. It is a kind of cruelty, saith Quintilian, to feed one in want, and not to sympathize with him. True religion begets tenderness ; as it melts the heart in tears of contrition towards God, so in bowels of compassion towards others, Isa. xi. 16. ' My bowels shall sound as an harp.' Let me allude, when our bowels of pity sound, then our alms make sweet music in the ears of God.

3. Mercifulness consists in a liberal contribution, Deut. xv. 8. ' If there be a poor man within thy

gates, thou shalt open thy hand wide unto him.' The Hebrew word to disperse, Psal. cxii. 9. signifies a largeness of bounty; it must be like water that overflows the banks. If God hath enriched men with estates, and made 'his candle (as Job saith to shine upon his tabernacle,' they must not encircle and engross all to themselves, but be as the moon, which having received its light from the sun, lets it shine to the world. The ancients, as Basil and Lorinus observe, made oil to be the emblem of charity; the golden oil of mercy must, like Aaron's oil run down upon the poor, which are the lower skirts of the garment; this liberal disbursement to the wants and necessities of others, God commands, Grace compels.

*Reason 1.* God commands: there is an express statute-law, Lev. xxv. 35. 'If thy brother be waxen poor, and fallen in decay with thee, then thou shalt relieve him.' The Hebrew is, thou shalt strengthen him; put under him a silver crutch when he is falling. It is worth our observation what great care God took of the poor, besides what was given them privately; God made many laws for the public and visible relief of the poor, Exod. xxiii. 11. 'The seventh year thou shalt let the land rest, and lie still, that the poor of thy people may eat.' God's intention in this law was, that the poor should be liberally provided for; they might freely eat of any thing which did grow of itself this seventh year; whether of herbs, vines or olive-trees: If it be asked how the poor could live only on these fruits, there being, as it is probable, no corn growing then? for answer, Cajetan is of opinion, they lived by selling these fruits, and so converting them into money, lived upon the price of the fruits.

There is another law made, Lev. xix. 9. 'And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field, neither

shalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest.' See how God indulged the poor, some corners of the field were, for the poors' sake, to be left uncut; and when the owners did reap, they must not go too near the earth with their sickle; the vulgar Latin reads it, Thou shalt not shear to the very ground. Something like an after-crop must be left; the shorter ears of corn, and such as did lie bending to the ground, were to be reserved for the poor, saith Tostatus.

And God made another law in favour of the poor, Deut. xiv. 28. 'At the end of three years thou shalt bring forth the tythe of thy increase the same year, and thou shalt lay it up in thy gates, and the Levite, and the fatherless, and the widow which are within thy gates, shall come, and shall eat, and be satisfied. The Hebrews write that every third year, besides the first tythe given to Levi, which was called the perpetual tythe, Numb. xviii. 21. the Jews did set apart another tythe of their increase for the use of the widows and orphans, and that was called the tythe of the poor. Besides, at the Jews solemn festivals, the poor were to have a share, Deut. xvi. 11.

And as relieving the necessitous was commanded under the law, so it stands in force under the gospel, 1 Tim. vi. 17, 18. 'Charge them that be rich in this world, that they do good, that they be rich in good works, &c. it is not only a counsel, but a charge; and the non-attendance to it runs men into a gospel *præmunire*. Thus we have seen the mind of God in this particular of charity, let all good Christians comment upon it in their practice; what benefit is there of gold while it is embowelled and locked up in a mine? and what is it the better to have a great estate, if it be so hoarded and cloistered up, as never to see the light?

2. As God commands, so grace compels to

works of mercy and beneficence, 2 Cor. v. 14. 'The love of Christ constraineth.' Grace comes with majesty upon the heart; it is not *in sermone*, but *virtute*; grace doth not lie as a sleepy habit in the soul, but will put forth itself in vigorous and glorious actings; grace can no more be concealed than fire; like new wine, it will have vent; grace doth not lie in the heart like a stone in the earth, but as seed in the earth, it will spring up into good works.

SECT. 6.

*Containing a Vindication of the Church of England.*

*Use 1. Inform.* It may serve to justify the church of England against the calumny of malevolent men; Julian upbraided the Christians that they were solifidians; and the church of Rome lays upon us this aspersion, that we are against good works; indeed we plead not for the merit of them; but we are for the use of them, Tit. iii. 14. 'Let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses.' We preach they are needful both *necessitate præcepti*, and *medii*: we read the angels had wings, and hands under their wings, Ezekiel i. 8. It may be emblematical of this truth, Christians must not only have the wings of faith to fly, but hands under their wings to work the works of mercy. Tit. iii. 8. 'This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that you maintain constantly, that they which have believed in God, might be careful to maintain good works.' The lamp of faith must be filled with the oil of charity; faith alone justifies, but justifying faith is not alone; you may as well separate weight from lead, or heat from fire, as works from faith; good works though they are not the causes of salvation, yet they are evidences; though they are not the foundation, yet they are the superstruc-

tate; faith must not be built upon works, but works must be built upon faith, Rom. vii. 4. 'Ye are married unto another, that ye should bring forth fruit unto God.' Faith is the grace which marries Christ, and good works are the children which faith bears; for the vindication of the doctrine of our church, and in honour of good works, I shall lay down these four aphorisms.

1. *Aphor.* Works are distinct from faith; it is vain to imagine that works are included in faith, as the diamond is inclosed in the ring; no, they are distinct, as the sap in the vine is different from the clusters that grow upon it.

2. *Aphor.* Works are the touchstone of faith: 'Shew me thy faith by thy works,' James ii. 18. Works are faith's letters of credence to shew; if, saith saint Bernard, thou seest a man full of good works, then by the rule of charity thou art not to doubt of his faith: we judge of the health of the pulse, where the blood stirs and operates; O Christian, judge of the health of thy faith by the pulse of mercy and charitableness; it is with faith as with a deed in law; to make a deed valid, there are three things requisite: the writing, the seal, the witnesses; so for the trial and confirmation of faith there must be these three things; the writing, the word of God; the seal, the Spirit of God; the witnesses, good works. Bring your faith to this scripture touchstone; faith doth justify works, works do testify faith.

3. *Aphor.* Works do honour faith: these fruits adorn the trees of righteousness? let the liberality of thy hand, (saith Clemens Alexandrinus) be the ornament of thy faith, and wear it as an holy bracelet about thy wrists, Job xxix. 15. 'I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame; I put on righteousness, and it clothed me; my judgment was as a robe and a diadem.' While Job was the

poors' benefactor and advocate, this was the ensign of his honour, it clothed him as a robe, and crowned him as a diadem. This is that which takes off the odium and obloquy, and makes others speak well of religion, when they see good works as hand-maids waiting upon this queen.

4. *Aphor.* Good works are in some sense more excellent than faith; in two respects.

1. Because they are of a more noble diffusive nature; though faith be more needful for ourselves, yet good works are more beneficial to others; faith is a receptive grace, it is all for self-interest, it moves within its own sphere. Works are for the good of others; and it is a more blessed thing to give than to receive.

2. Good works are more visible and conspicuous than faith. Faith is a more occult grace, it may lie hid in the heart, and not be seen; but when works are joined with it, now it shines forth in its native beauty; though a garden be ever so well decked with flowers, yet they are not seen till the light comes: so the heart of a Christian may be enriched with faith, but it is like a flower in the night, it is not seen till works come; when this light shines before men, then faith appears in its orient colours.

#### SECT. 7.

#### *A Check to the Unmerciful.*

*Use 2. Reproof.* If this be the effigies of a good man, that he is of a merciful disposition, then it doth sharply reprove those that are far from this temper; their hearts are like the 'scales of the leviathan, shut up together as with a close seal,' Job xli. 15. They move only within their own circle, but do not alleviate the necessities of others; they



have a flourishing estate, but like him in the gospel they have a withered hand, and cannot stretch it out to good uses; these are akin to the churl Nabal, 1 Sam. xxv. 11. 'Shall I take my bread, and my water, and give it unto men whom I know not whence they be?' It was said of the emperor Pertinax, he had a large empire, but a narrow scanty heart.

There was a temple at Athens, which was called the temple of Mercy, it was dedicated to charitable uses; and it was the greatest reproach to upbraid one with this, that he had never been in the temple of mercy; it is the greatest disgrace to a Christian to be unmerciful: covetous men, while they enrich themselves, they debase themselves, setting up a monopoly, and committing idolatry with Mammon; thus making themselves lower than their angels, as God made them lower than his angels. In the time of pestilence it is sad to have your houses shut up, but it is worse to have your hearts shut up. How miserable is it to have a sea of sin, and not a drop of mercy? covetous hearts, like the leviathan, are firm as a stone, Job xli. 24. One may as well extract oil out of a flint, as the golden oil of charity out of their flinty hearts. The philosopher saith, that the coldness of the heart is a presage of death: when men's affections to works of mercy are frozen, this coldness at heart is ominous, and doth sadly portend that they are dead in sin. We read in the law, that the shellfish was unclean; this might probably be one reason, because the meat of it was inclosed in the shell, and it was hard to come by. They are to be reckoned among the unclean, who inclose all their estate within the shell of their own cabinet, and will not let others be the better for it. How many have lost their souls by being so saving!

There are some who perhaps will give the poor good words, and that is all, Jam. ii. 15. 'If a bro-

ther or sister be naked, and destitute of food, and one of you say to them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled, notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful, what doth it profit? Good words are but a cold kind of charity, the poor cannot live as the cameleon upon the air; let your words be as smooth as oil, they will not heal the wounded; let them drop as the honeycomb, they will not feed the hungry, 1-Cor. xiii. 1. 'Though I speak with the tongue of angels, and have not charity, I am but as a tinkling cymbal.' It is better to be charitable as a saint, than eloquent as an angel. Such as are cruel to the poor, let me tell you, you unchristian yourselves; unmercifulness is the sin of the heathen, Rom. i. 31. While you put off the bowels of mercy, you put off the badge of Christianity. Saint Ambrose saith, that when we relieve not one whom we see ready to perish with hunger, we are guilty of his death. If this rule hold true, there are more guilty of the breach of the sixth commandment, than we are aware of. Saint James speaks a sad word, James ii. 13. 'For he shall have judgment without mercy, that shewed no mercy.' How do they think to find mercy from Christ, who never shewed mercy to Christ in his members? Dives denied Lazarus a crumb of bread, and Dives was denied a drop of water: at the last day behold the sinner's indictment, Matt. xxv. 42. 'I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink.' Christ doth not say ye took away my meat, but ye gave me none, ye did not feed my members; then follows the sentence, 'Depart from me ye cursed.' When Christ's poor come to your doors, and you bid them depart from you, the time may come when you shall knock at heaven's gate, and Christ will say, go from my door, 'depart from me ye cursed.'

In short, covetousness is a foolish sin; God gave the rich man in the gospel that appellation, 'Thou fool,' Luke xii. 20. The covetous man doth not enjoy what he doth possess; he imbitters his own life, he discruciates himself with care, either how to get, or how to increase, or how to secure an estate; and what is the issue and result? often, as a just reward of sordid penuriousness, God doth blast and wither him in his outward estate: That saying of Gregory Nazianzen is to be seriously weighed, God many times lets the thief take away, and the moth consume that which is injuriously and unmercifully withheld from the poor.

Before I leave this use, I am sorry that any who go for honest men should be brought into the indictment; I mean, that any professors should be impeached of this sin of covetousness, and unmercifulness. Sure I am, God's elect put on bowels, Col. iii. 12. I tell you, these devout misers are the reproach of Christianity: they are wens and spots in the face of religion. I remember Ælian in his history reports, that in India there is a griffin having four feet and wings, his bill like the eagle's; it is hard whether to rank him among the beasts or the fowls: so I may say of penurious votaries, they have the wings of profession, by which they seem to fly to heaven, but the feet of beasts, walking on the earth, and even licking the dust? it is hard where to rank these, whether among the godly or the wicked: Oh take heed, that seeing your religion will not destroy your covetousness, at last your covetousness doth not destroy your religion. The fabulist tells a story of the hedge-hog, that came to the coney-burrows in stormy weather, and desired harbour, promising that he would be a quiet guest; but when once he had gotten entertainment, he did set up his prickles, and never left them till he had thrust the poor conies out of their burrows: so cov-

etousness, though it hath many fair pleas to insinuate, and wind itself into the heart, yet as soon as you have let it in, this thorn will never leave pricking till it hath choked all good beginnings, and thrust all religion out of your hearts.

SECT. 8.

*Persuading to Mercifulness.*

*Use 3. Exhort.* I proceed next to the exhortation, to beseech all Christians to put on bowels of mercies: be ready to alleviate the miseries and necessities of others. Saint Ambrose calls charity the sum of Christianity; and the apostle makes it the very definition of religion, James i. ult. 'Pure religion, and undefiled, before God and the Father, is this, to visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction.' The Hebrew for poor signifies one that is empty, or drawn dry. So the poor are exhausted of their strength, beauty, substance, like ponds they are dried up; therefore let them be filled again with the silver streams of charity. The poor are as it were in the grave, the comfort of their life is buried; oh Christians, help with your merciful hands to raise them out of the sepulchre: God 'sendeth his springs into the vallies,' Psal. civ. 10. Let the springs of your liberality run among the vallies of poverty; your sweetest and most benign influences should fall upon the lower grounds: what is all your seeming devotion without bounty and mercifulness? I have known many, saith Basil, pray and fast, but relieve not such as are in distress; they are for a zeal that will put them to no charges: what are they the better, saith he, for all their seeming virtue? we read the incense was to be laid upon the fire, Lev. xvi. 13. The flame of devotion must be perfumed with the incense of charity. Aaron was to

have a bell and a pomegranate; the pomegranate, as some of the learned observe, was a symbol of good works. They want the pomegranate, saith Gregory Nazianzen, who have no good works. The wise men did not only bow the knee to Christ, but present him with gold, myrrh, and frankincense,' Matt. ii. 11. Pretences of zeal are insufficient; we must not only worship Christ, but bestow something upon his members; this is to present Christ with gold and frankincense. Isaac would not bless Jacob by the voice, but he feels and handles him, and supposing them to be Esau's hands, he blessed him. God will not bless men by their voice, their loud prayers, their devout discourses; but if he feel Esau's hands, if their hands have wrought good works, then he blesseth them.

Let me exhort you therefore to deeds of mercy, let your fingers drop with the myrrh of liberality; sow your golden seed; in this sense it is lawful to put out your money to use, when you lay it out for good uses: remember that excellent saying of saint Austin, Give those things to the poor which you cannot keep, that you may receive those things which you cannot lose. There are many occasions of exercising your mercifulness. The poor are everywhere. Hear the orphan's cry, pity the widow's tears. Some there are who want employment, it would do well to set their wheel a-going: others, who are past employment; be as eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame: some, whose families are sinking, if some merciful hand doth not help to shore them up. Before I press arguments to liberality and munificence, there are three objections lie in the way which I shall endeavour to remove.

*Obj.* 1. We may give, and so in time come ourselves to want?

*Ans.* Let Basil answer this: Wells, saith he, which have their water drawn, spring ever more freely.

**Prov. xi 25.** ‘The liberal soul shall be made fat.’ Luther speaks of a monastery in Austria, which was very rich while it gave annually to the poor, but when it left off giving, the monastery began to decay. There is nothing lost by doing our duty; an estate may be imparted, yet not impaired. The flowers yield honey to the bee, yet hurt not their own fruit: when the candle of prosperity shines upon us, we may light our neighbour that is in the dark, and have never the less light ourselves. Whatever is disbursed to pious uses, God doth bring it in some other way; as the loaves in breaking multiplied, or as the widow’s oil increased by pouring out, 1 Kings xvii. 16.

*Obj. 2.* I cannot do so much as others, erect churches, build hospitals, augment libraries; maintain scholars at the university?

*Ans.* If you cannot do so much, yet do something; the widow’s two mites cast into the treasury were accepted, Luke xxi. God, as Chrysostom observes, looked not at the smallness of her gift, but the largeness of her heart. In the law, he that could not bring a lamb for an offering, if he brought but two turtle-doves, it sufficed. We read, **Exod. xxxv.** the people brought ‘gold and silver, and goat’s hair, to the building of the tabernacle;’ on which place, saith Origen, I desire, Lord, to bring something to the building of thy temple, if not gold to make the mercy-seat on, if not silk to make the curtain on, yet a little goat’s hair, that I may not be found in the number of those that have brought nothing to thy temple.

*Obj. 3.* But I have not any thing to bestow upon the necessities of others.

*Ans. 1.* Hast thou to bestow upon thy lusts? hast thou money to feed thy pride, thy epicurism? and canst thou find nothing to relieve the poor members of Christ?

*Ans. 2.* Admit this excuse to be real, that you have not such an estate, yet you may do something wherein you may express your mercy to the poor; you may sympathize with them, pray for them, speak a word of comfort to them, Isa. xl. 2. 'Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem.' If you can give them no gold, you may speak a word in season, which may be as apples of gold in pictures of silver: nay more, you may be helpful to the poor, in stirring up others who have estates to relieve them; as it is with the wind, if a man be hungry, the wind will not fill him; but it can blow the sails of the mill, and make it grind corn for the use of man; so tho' thou hast not an estate of thyself, to help him who is in want, yet thou mayest stir up others to help him; thou mayest blow the sails of their affections, causing them to shew mercy, and so mayest help thy brother by a proxy.

Having answered these objections, let me now pursue the exhortation to mercifulness: I shall lay down several arguments, which I desire may be weighed in the balance of reason and conscience.

*Arg. 1.* To be diffusively good, is the great end of our creation, Eph. ii. 10. 'Created in Christ Jesus to good works.' Every creature answers the end of its creation; the star shines, the bird sings, the plant bears; the end of life is service. He that doth not answer his end in respect of usefulness, cannot enjoy his end in respect of happiness. Many, saith Seneca, have been long in the world, but have not lived, they have done no good. An unuseful person serves for nothing but to cumber the ground; and because he is barren in figs, he shall be fruitful in curses, Heb. vi. 8.

*Arg. 2.* By this we resemble God, who is a God of mercy; he is said to delight in mercy, Micah vii. 18. 'His mercies are over all his works,' Ps. cxlv. 9. He requites good for evil; like the clouds, which

receive ill vapours from us, but return them to us again in sweet showers. There is not a creature lives but tastes of the mercies of God; every bird, saith Ambrose, doth in its kind sing hymns of praise to God for his bounty: but men and angels do in a more particular manner taste the cream and quintessence of God's mercies.

1. What temporal mercies have you received! every time you draw your breath, you suck in mercy; every bit of bread you eat, the hand of mercy carves it out to you; you never drink but in a golden cup of mercy.

2. What spiritual mercies hath God enriched some of you with; pardoning, adopting, saving mercy! the picture of God's mercy can never be drawn to the full; you cannot take the breadth of his mercy; for it is infinite; nor the height of it, for it reacheth above the clouds; nor the length of it, for it is from everlasting to everlasting, Psalm ciii. 17. The works of mercy are the glory of the Godhead: Moses prays, 'Lord, shew me thy glory,' Exod. xxiii. 18. Saith God, 'I will make all my goodness to pass before thee,' ver. 19. God doth account himself most glorious in the shining robes of his mercy; now by works of mercy we resemble the God of mercy; we are bid to draw our lines according to this copy, Luke vi. 36. 'Be ye merciful, as your Father also is merciful.'

*Arg. 3.* Alms are a sacrifice. Heb. xiii. 16. 'To do good, and to communicate forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased;' when you are distributing to the poor, it is as if you were praying, as if you were worshipping God. There are two sorts of sacrifices; expiatory, the sacrifice of Christ's blood; and gratulatory, the sacrifice of alms. This, saith holy Greenham, is more acceptable to God than any other sacrifice: Acts x. 4. The angel said to Cornelius, 'thy alms are come



up for a memorial before God.' The backs of the poor are the altar on which this sacrifice is to be offered.

*Arg. 4.* We ourselves live upon alms; other creatures do liberally contribute to our necessities; the sun hath not its light for itself, but for us; it doth enrich us with its golden beams; the earth brings us a fruitful crop; and to shew how joyful a mother she is in bringing forth, the Psalmist saith, 'The vallies are covered with corn, they shout for joy, they also sing,' Psal. lxxv. 13. One creature gives us wool, another oil, another silk; we are fain to go a begging to the creation. Shall every creature be for the good of man, and man only be for himself? how absurd and irrational is this!

*Arg. 5.* We are to extend our liberality by virtue of a membership, Isa. lviii. 7. 'That thou hide not thyself from thy own flesh.' The poor are fellow members of the same body: The members do by a law of equity and sympathy contribute one to another; the eye conveys light to the body, the heart blood, the head spirits; that is a dead member in the body, which doth not communicate to the rest. Thus it is in the body politic; let no man think it is too far below him to mind the wants and necessities of others; it is pity but that hand should be cut off which disdains to pluck a thorn out of the foot. It is spoken in honour of that renowned princess, the empress of Theodosius the great, that she did herself visit the sick, and prepare relief for them with her own imperial hands.

*Arg. 6.* We are not lords of an estate, but stewards; and how soon may we hear that word, 'give an account of thy stewardship, for thou mayest be no longer steward,' Luke xvi. 2. An estate is a talent to trade with; it is as dangerous to hide our talent, as to spend it, Matt. xxv. 25, 30. If the covetous man keep his gold too long, it will begin

to rust, and the rust of it will witness against him, James v. 3.

7. The examples of others who have been renowned for acts of mercy and munificence.

1. Our Lord Christ, a great example of charity, he was not more full of merit than bounty. Trajan the emperor did rend off a piece of his own robe to wrap his soldiers wounds. Christ did more, he rent his flesh, he made a medicine of his body and blood to heal us, Isa. liii. 5. 'By his stripes ye are healed.' Here was a pattern of charity without a parallel.

2. The Jews are noted in this kind; it is a Rabbinical observation, that those who live devoutly among the Jews, distribute a tenth part of their estate among the poor; and they give so freely, saith Philo the Jew, as if by giving they hoped to receive some great gratuity; now if the Jews are so devoted to works of mercy, who live without priest, without temple, without Messiah, shall not we much more who profess our faith in the blessed Messiah?

3. Let me tell you of heathens; I have read of Titus Vespasian, he was so inured to works of mercy, that remembering he had given nothing that day, he cried out, I have lost a day. It is reported of some of the Turks, that they have servants whom they employ on purpose to inquire what poor they have, and they send relief to them. And the Turks have a saying in their Alcoran; that if men knew what a blessed thing it were to distribute alms, rather than spare, they would give some of their own flesh to relieve the poor. And shall not a Christian's creed be better than a Turk's alcoran? Let all this persuade to works of mercy.

When poor indigent creatures, like Moses, are laid in the ark of bulrushes weeping, and ready to sink in the waters of affliction, be as temporal sa-viours to them, and draw them out of the waters

with a golden cord. Let the breasts of your mercy nurse the poor; be like the trees of the sanctuary, both for food and medicine; when distressed and even starved souls are fainting, let your costly ingredients revive, and fetch spirits in them. Let others see 'the coats and garments which you have made' for the poor, Acts ix. 39.

*Arg. 8.* The sin of unmercifulness. 1. The unmerciful man is an unthankful man, and what can be said worse; thou to whom the Lord hath given an estate, thy cup runs over, but hast a miserly heart, and wilt not part with any thing for good uses; it is death to thee to relieve them that are dying; know that thou art in the highest degree ungrateful; thou art not fit for human society; the scripture hath put these two together, 'unthankful, without natural affection,' 2 Tim. iii. 2, 3. God may repent that ever he gave such men estates, and may say, as Hos. ii. 9. 'Therefore will I return and take away my corn, and my wine in the season thereof, and will recover my wool and my flax.'

2. The unmerciful man wants love to Christ; all men would be thought to love Christ, and would be very angry with them that should question their love; but do they love Christ who let the members of Christ starve? no, these love their money more than Christ, and come under that fearful Anathema, 1 Cor. xvi. 22.

*Arg. 9.* Lastly, I shall use but one argument more to persuade to works of mercy, and that is the reward which follows alms-deeds; giving of alms is a glorious work; and let me assure you, it is no unfruitful work. Whatsoever is disbursed to the poor, is given to Christ, Matt. xxv. 40. 'Inasmuch as ye have done it to one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.' The poor man's hand is Christ's treasury, and there is

nothing lost that is put there. The text saith the merciful shall obtain mercy; in the Greek, They shall be bemercified. What is it we need most? is it not mercy, pardoning, and saving mercy? what is it we desire most on our death-bed? is it not mercy? thou that shewest mercy shalt find mercy; thou that pourest in the oil of compassion to others, God will pour in the golden oil of salvation into thee, Matt. vii. 2. The Shunamite woman shewed mercy to the prophet, and she received kindness from him another way. 2 Kings iv. She welcomed him to her house, and he restored her dead child to life; they that sow mercy shall reap in kind; 'they shall obtain mercy;' such is the sweetness and mercifulness of God's nature, that he will not suffer any man to be a loser. No kindness shewed to him shall be unregarded or unrewarded. God will be in no man's debt; for a cup of cold water, he shall have a draught of Christ's warm blood to refresh his soul, Heb. vi. 10. 'For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints,' &c. God's mercy is a tender mercy, a pure mercy, a rich mercy; mercy shall follow and overtake the merciful man; he shall be rewarded,

1. In this life. 2. In the life to come.

1. The merciful man shall be rewarded in this life; he shall be blessed,

1. In his person, Psal. xl. 1. 'Blessed is he that considers the poor.' Let him go whither he will, a blessing goes along with him: he is in favour with God, God casts a smiling aspect upon him.

2. Blessed in his name, Psal. cxii. 6. 'He shall be had in everlasting remembrance.' When the niggard's name shall rot, the name of a merciful man shall be embalmed with honour, and give forth its scent as the wine of Lebanon.

3. Blessed in his estate: Prov. xi. 25. 'The liberal soul shall be made fat.' He shall have the fat of the earth, and the dew of heaven. He shall not only have the venison but the blessing.

4. Blessed in his posterity, Psal. xxxvii. 26. 'He is ever merciful, and lendeth; his seed is blessed.' He shall not only leave an estate behind, but a blessing behind to his children; and God will see that the entail of that blessing shall not be cut off.

5. Blessed in his negotiations, Deut. xv. 10. 'For this thing the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thine hand unto.' The merciful man shall be blessed in his building, planting, journeying; whatever he is about, a blessing shall empty itself upon him. He shall be a prosperous man; the honey-comb of a blessing shall be still dropping upon him.

6. Blessed with long life, Psal. xli. 2. 'The Lord will preserve him, and keep him alive.' He hath helped to keep others alive, and God will keep him alive: is there any thing then lost by mercifulness? it spins out the silver thread of life; many are taken away the sooner for their unmercifulness; because their hearts are straitened, their lives are shortened.

2. The merciful man shall be rewarded in the life to come. Aristotle joins these two together, liberality and utility. God will reward the merciful man hereafter, though not for his works, yet according to his works, Rev. xx. 12. 'I saw the dead small and great stand before God, and the books were opened, and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books according to their works.' As God hath a bottle to put our tears in, so he hath a book to write our alms in; as God will put a veil over his people's sins, so he will, in free grace, set a crown upon their works: The way to lay up, is to lay out: other parts of

our estate is left behind, Eccl. ix. 18, 19. but that which is given to Christ's poor, is hoarded up in heaven; that is a blessed kind of giving, which, though it makes the purse lighter, it makes the crown heavier.

You that are mercifully inclined, remember whatever alms you distribute,

1. You shall have good security, Eccl. xi. 1. Luke vi. 38. Prov. xix. 17. 'He that giveth to the poor, lendeth to the Lord, and that which he hath given will he pay him again.' There is God's counter-bond to save you harmless, which is better security than any PUBLIC FAITH; yet here is our unbelief and atheism, we will not take God's bond; we commonly put our deeds of mercy among our desperate debts.

2. You shall be paid with overplus; for a wedge of gold which you have parted with, you shall have a weight of glory; for a cup of cold water you shall have 'Rivers of pleasure, which run at God's right hand for evermore.' The interest comes to infinitely more than the principal: Pliny writes of a country in Africa, where the people for every bushel of seed they sow, receive an hundred and fifty fold increase. For every penny you drop into Christ's treasury, you shall receive a thousand fold increase; your after-crop of glory will be so great, that though you are still reaping, you will never be able to take in the whole harvest; let all this persuade rich men to 'honour the Lord with their substance.'

## SECT. 9.

### *Containing Directions in shewing Mercy.*

Before I conclude this subject let me lay down some rules briefly concerning works of mercy.

*Rule 1.* Charity must be free, Deut. xv. 10. 'Thou shalt give, and thy heart shall not be grieved,' &c. that is, thou shalt not be troubled at parting with thy money; he that gives grievingly, gives grudgingly; it is not a gift, but a tax: charity must flow like spring-water; the heart must be the spring, the hand the pipe, the poor the cistern; God loves a cheerful giver. Be not like the crab-apple, which hath all the verjuice squeezed and pressed out. You must not give to the poor, as if you were delivering your purse on the high-way: Charity without alacrity, is rather a fine than an offering; it is rather doing of penance than giving of alms; charity must be like the myrrh which drops from the tree without cutting or forcing.

*Rule 2.* We must give that which is our own, Is. lviii. 7. 'To deal thy bread to the hungry,' it must be bread of thine own. The word for alms in the Syriac signifies justice, to shew that alms must be of that which is justly gotten; the scripture puts them together, Micah vi. 8. 'To do justice, to love mercy;' we must not make a sacrifice of sacrilege, Isa. lxi. 8. 'For I the Lord love judgment, I hate robbery for burnt offering.' He that shall build an alms house or hospital with goods ill gotten, displays the ensign of his pride, and sets up the monument of his shame.

*Rule 3.* Do all in Christ, and for Christ.

1. Do all in Christ; labour that your persons may be in Christ. We are 'accepted in him,' Eph. i. 6. Origen, Chrysostom, and Peter Martyr affirm, that the best works, not springing from faith, are lost. The Pelagians thought to have posed Austin with that question, Whether it was sin in the heathen to clothe the naked? Austin answered rightly, The doing of good is not in itself simply evil, but proceeding of infidelity it becomes evil, Tit. i. 15. 'To them that are unbelieving is nothing pure.'

That fruit is most sweet and genuine, which is brought forth in the vine, John xv. 4. Out of Christ all our alms-deeds are but the fruit of the olive; they are not good works, but dead works.

2. Do all for Christ; namely, for his sake, that you may testify your love to him; love mellow and ripens our alms-deeds, it makes them a precious perfume; as Mary did out of love bring her ointments and sweet spices, to anoint Christ's dead body, so, out of love to Christ, bring your ointments and anoint his living body, viz. saints and members.

*Rule 4.* Works of mercy are to be done in humility; away with ostentation; the worm breeds in the fairest fruit, the moth in the finest cloth. Pride will be creeping into our best things: beware of this dead fly in the box of ointment. When Moses' face did shine, he put a veil over it; so while your light shines before men, and they see your good works, cover yourselves with the veil of humility; as the silk-worm, while she weaves her curious works, hides herself within the silk, and is not seen, so we should hide ourselves from pride and vain-glory.

It was the sin of the Pharisees, while they were distributing alms, they did blow the trumpet, Mat. vi. 2. They did not give their alms, but sell them for applause. A proud man casts his bread upon the waters, as a fisherman casts his angle upon the waters, he angles for vain-glory. I have read of one Cosmus Medicis, a rich citizen of Florence, that he confessed to a near friend of his, he built so many magnificent structures, and spent so much on scholars and libraries, not for any love to learning, but to raise up to himself trophies of fame and renown. An humble soul denies himself, yea, even annihilates himself; he thinks how little it is he can do for God; and if he could do more, it were but a due



debt; therefore looks upon all his works as if he had done nothing. The saints are brought in at the last day as disowning their works of charity, Matt. xxv. 37. 'Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee?' &c. A good Christian doth not only empty his hand of alms, but empties his heart of pride; while he raiseth the poor out of the dust, he lays himself in the dust; works of mercy must be like the cassia, which is a sweet spice, but grows low.

*Rule 5.* Dispose your alms prudentially; it is said of the merciful man, 'he orders his affairs with discretion,' Psal. cxii. 5. There is a great deal of wisdom in distinguishing between them that have sinned themselves into poverty, and who by the hand of God are brought into poverty. Discretion in the distribution of alms, consists in two things.

1. In finding out a fit object. 2. In taking a fit season.

1. In finding out a fit object, and that comes under a double notion. 1. Give to those who are in most need; raise the hedge where it is lowest; feed the lamp which is going out. 2. Give to those who may probably be more serviceable; though we bestow cost and dressing upon a weak plant, yet not upon a dead plant; breed up such as may help to 'build the house of Israel,' Ruth iv. 11. that may be pillars in church and state, not caterpillars making your charity to blush.

2. Discretion in giving alms, is in taking the fit season; give to charitable uses in time of health and prosperity; distribute your silver and gold to the poor, before 'the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken,' Eccl. xii. 6. make your hands your executors; not as some who do reserve all they give till the term of life is ready to expire; and truly what is then bestowed, is not given away, but taken away by death; it is not

charity, but necessity. Oh do not so marry yourselves to money, that you are resolved nothing shall part you but death, be not like the medlar, which is never good till it be rotten. A covetous man may be compared to a christmas-box, he receives money, but parts with none, till death breaks this box in pieces; then the silver and gold comes tumbling out: give in time of health; these are the alms which God takes notice of, and, as Calvin saith, putteth into his book of accounts.

*Rule 6.* Give thankfully: they should be more thankful that give an alms, than they that receive it: we should, saith Nazianzen, give a thankful offering to God that we are in the number of givers, and not receivers; bless God for a willing mind; to have not only an estate, but an heart, is matter of gratulation.

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MATT. v. 8. *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.*

## CHAP. XVI.

### *Describing Heart Purity.*

THE holy God, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, calls here for heart purity; and to such as are adorned with this jewel, he promiseth a glorious and beatifical vision of himself, 'they shall see God.' Two things are to be explained.

1. The nature of purity. 2. The subject of purity.

1. The nature of purity. Purity is a sacred refined thing, it stands diametrically opposite to whatsoever defileth; we must distinguish of purity. 1. There is a primitive purity which is in God originally and essentially as the light is in the sun. Holi-

ness is the glory of the Godhead, Exod. xv. 21. 'glorious in holiness;' God is the pattern and prototype of all holiness.

2. There is a created purity; this holiness is in the angels, and was once in Adam: Adam's heart had not the least spot or tincture of impurity. We call that wine pure which hath no dregs, and that gold pure which hath no dross mingled with it. Such was Adam's holiness, it was like the wine which comes from the grape, having no mixture; but this is not to be found on the earth, we must go to heaven for it.

3. There is an evangelical purity; when grace is mingled with some sin; like gold in the ore, like air in the twilight, like wine that hath a dash in it, like fine cloth with a coarse list, like Nebuchadnezzar's image, 'part of silver and part of clay,' Dan. ii. 35. This mixture God calls purity in a gospel-sense; as a face may be said to be fair which hath some freckles in it. Where there is a study of purity, and a loathing ourselves for our impurity, this is to be pure in heart.

Some by pure in heart, understand chastity; others sincerity, Psal. xxxii. 2. But I suppose purity here is to be taken in a larger sense, for the several kinds and degrees of holiness; they are said to be pure, who are consecrated persons, having the oil of grace poured upon them. This purity is much mistaken,

1. Civility is not purity; a man may be clothed with moral virtues, justice, prudence, temperance, yet go to hell.

2. Profession is not purity; a man may have a name to live, and yet be dead, Rev. iii. 1. He may be swept by civility, and garnished by profession, yet the devil may dwell in the house. The blazing comet is no star; the hypocrite's tongue may be silver, yet his heart stone. Purity consists in two

things. 1. Rectitude of mind; a prizing holiness in the judgment, Psal. cxix. 30. 2. Conformity of will: an embracing of holiness in the affections, Psal. cxix. 97. A pure soul is cast into the mould of holiness; holiness is a blood runs in his veins.

2. The subject of purity; the heart. Pure in heart. Purity of heart doth not exclude purity of life; no more than the pureness of the fountain excludes the pureness of the stream. But it is called purity of heart, because this is the main thing in religion, and there can be no purity of life without it. A Christian's great care should be to keep the heart pure, as one would especially preserve the spring from being poisoned. In a duel, a man will particularly fence and guard his heart; so a wise Christian should above all things keep his heart pure; take heed the love of sin doth not get in there, lest it prove mortal.

*Doct.* Christians should above all things breathe after heart-purity, 1 Tim. iii. 9. 'Holding the mystery of faith in a pure conscience; justification causeth our happiness, sanctification evidenceth it.

REASONS for 1. Purity. 2. Heart-purity.

The reasons for purity are, 1. Purity is a thing called for in scripture, 1 Pet. i. 16. 'Be ye holy for I am holy.' It is not only the minister bids you be holy, but God himself calls for it; what should the holy God do with unholy servants? 2. Because of that filthy and cursed condition we are in before purity be wrought in us; we are a lump of clay and sin mingled together; sin doth not only blind us, but defile us: it is called filthiness, James i. 21. And to shew how befilthying a thing it is, it is compared to a plague-sore, 1 Kings viii. 38. To spots, Deut. 32. 5. To vomit, 2 Pet ii. 22. To the infants' tumbling in blood, Ezek. xvi. 6. To a menstruous cloth, Isa. xxx. 22. which, as Hierom saith

was the most defiling thing under the law. All the legal washings which God appointed, were but to put men in mind of their loathsomeness, before they were washed in the blood of Christ. If all the evils in the world were put together, and their quintessence strained out, they could not make a thing so black and polluted as sin doth; a sinner is a devil in man's shape. When Moses' rod was turned into a serpent, he fled from it; would God open men's eyes, and shew them their deformities, and damnable spots, they would be afraid, and fly from themselves as serpents! this shews what need we have of purity. When grace comes it washeth off this hellish filth, of Ethiopians, it makes us Israelites; it turns ravens into swans; it makes them who are as black as hell, to become white as snow.

5. Because none but the pure in heart are interested in the covenant of grace; covenanted persons have the sprinkling with clean water, Ezek. xxxvi. 25. Now, till we are thus sprinkled, we have nothing to do with the new covenant, and, by consequence, with the New Jerusalem. If a will be made only to such persons as are so qualified, none can come in for a part, but such as have those qualifications. So, God hath made a will and covenant that he will be our God, and will settle heaven upon us by entail, but with this clause or proviso in the will, that we be purified persons, having the clean water sprinkled upon us: now, till then, we have nothing to do with God or mercy.

4. Purity is the end of our election, Ephes. i. 4. 'He hath chosen us that we should be holy;' not for holiness, but to holiness, Rom. viii. 29. 'Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son.' God predestinates us to Christ's image, which image consists in righteousness and true holiness, Eph. iv. 24. So that till

thou art holy, thou canst not shew any sign of election upon thee, but rather the devil's brand-mark.

5. Purity is the end of our redemption; if we could have gone to heaven in our sins, Christ needed not have died. Why did he shed his blood but to redeem us from a vain conversation? 1 Pet. xviii. 19. and Tit. ii. 14. 'Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people;' Christ shed his blood to wash off our filth; the cross was both an altar and a laver. Jesus Christ died not only to save us from wrath, 1 Thess. i. ult. but to save us from sin, Matt. i. 21. Out of his sides came water, which signifies our cleansing, as well as blood, which signifies our justifying, 1 John v. 6. The truth is, it were to make the body of Christ monstrous, if the head should be pure and not the members.

2. Why purity must be chiefly in the heart. 1. Because if the heart be not pure, we differ nothing from a Pharisaical purity; the Pharisees' holiness did consist chiefly in externals; theirs was an outside purity, they never minded the inside, the heart, Matt. xxiii. 25. 'Wo unto you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for ye make clean the outside of the cup, and of the platter, but within ye are full of extortion;' and ver. 27. 'Ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead mens' bones.' The Pharisees were good only in the surface, whited over, not white; they were like a rotten post laid in vermilion colour; like a fair chimney-piece gilded without, but within nothing but soot. Such hypocrites Salvian complains of, who had Christ in their mouths, but to no purpose; we must go farther, be pure in heart, like the king's daughter, 'all glorious within,' Psal. xlv. 13. else ours is but a Pharisaical purity; and Christ saith, Matt. v. 20. 'Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteous-

ness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

2. The heart must especially be kept pure, because the heart is the chief seat or place of God's residence. God dwells in the heart, he takes up the heart for his own lodgings, Isa. lvii. 15. Eph. iii. 17. therefore it must be pure and holy. A king's palace must be kept from defilement, especially his presence-chamber: the heart is God's presence-chamber, how holy ought that to be? if the body be the temple of the Holy Ghost, 1 Cor. vi. 19. the heart is the Holy of Holies: oh take heed of defiling that room where God is to come, let that room be washed with holy tears.

3. The heart must especially be pure, because it is the heart sanctifies all we do; if the heart be holy, all is holy, our affections holy, our duties holy. 'The altar sanctified the gift,' Matt. xxiii. 19. the heart is the altar that sanctifies the offering. The Romans kept their springs from being poisoned; the heart is the spring of all our actions, let us keep this spring from poison; be pure in heart.

#### SECT. 1.

#### *Shewing the true Beauty of the Soul.*

*Use 1. Inform. Branch 1.* See here what is the beauty that sets off a soul in God's eye, viz. Purity of heart. Thou who art ever so beautiful, art but a spiritual leper till thou art pure in heart. God is in love with the pure heart, for he sees his own picture drawn there; holiness is a beam of God, it is the angels' glory; they are pure virgin-spirits; take away purity from an angel, and he is no more an angel but a devil; thou who art pure in heart, hast the angels' glory shining in thee; thou hast the embroidery and workmanship of the Holy Ghost upon

thee. The pure heart is God's paradise where he delights to walk; it is his lesser heaven; the dove delights in the purest air; the Holy Ghost, who descended in the likeness of a dove, delights in the purest soul. God saith of the pure in heart, as of Si-on, Psal. cxxxii. 14. 'This is my rest for ever, here will I dwell.' God loves the fairest complexion; the pure in heart is Christ's bride, decked and bespangled with the jewels of holiness, Cant. iv. 9. 'Thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes.' Thine eyes, that is, thy graces, these, as a chain of pearl, have drawn mine heart to thee; of all hearts, God loves the pure heart best. Thou who dressest thyself by the glass of the word, and 'adornest the hidden man of thy heart,' 1 Pet. iii. 4. art most precious in God's eyes, though thou mayest be blear-eyed as Leah, lame as Barzillai, yet being pure in heart, thou art the mirror of beauty, and mayest say, 'Yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, Isa. xlix. 5. How may this raise the esteem of purity: this is a beauty that never fades, and which makes God himself fall in love with us.

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SECT. 2.

*That Christians must not rest in outside Purity.*

*Branch 2.* If we must be pure in heart, then we must not rest in outward purity; civility is not sufficient; a sow may be washed, yet a sow still; civility doth but wash a man, grace changeth him; civility, like a star, may shine in the eyes of the world, but it differs as much from purity, as the crystal from the diamond; civility is but strewing flowers on a dead corpse; a man may be wonderfully moralized, yet but a tame devil; how many have made civility their saviour? morality may as



well damn as vice; a vessel may be sunk with gold as well as with dung.

Observe two things:

1. The civil person, though he will not commit gross sins, yet he is not sensible of heart-sins; he discerns not 'the law in his members,' Rom. vii. 23. He is not troubled for unbelief, hardness of heart, vanity of thoughts; he abhors jail-sins, not gospel-sins.

2. The civil person hath an aching tooth at religion; his heart riseth against holiness; the snake is of a fine colour, but hath a deadly sting. The civil man is fair to look to, but hath a secret antipathy against the ways of God; he hates grace as much as vice; zeal is as odious to him as uncleanness; so that civility is not to be rested in: the heart must be pure; God would have Aaron wash the inwards of the sacrifice, Lev. ix. Civility doth but wash the outside, the inwards must be washed: 'Blessed are the pure in heart.'

### SECT. 3.

#### *Shewing the Signs of an impure Heart.*

*Use 2. Trial.* Let us put ourselves upon the trial, whether we are pure-hearted or no. Here I shall do two things to shew the signs of,

1. An impure heart. 2. A pure heart.

1. An ignorant heart is an impure heart; to be ignorant of sin, or Christ, argues impurity of heart. Nahash the Ammonite would enter into covenant with the men of Jabesh-Gilead, so he might thrust out their right eyes, 1 Sam. xi. 2. Satan leaves men their left eye, in worldly knowledge they are quick-sighted enough; but the right eye of spiritual knowledge is quite put out, 2 Cor. iv. 4. Ignorance is satan's strong hold, Acts xxvi. 18. The

devils are bound in chains of darkness, Jude vi. So are all ignorant persons; impossible it is that an ignorant heart should be good; it is knowledge makes the heart good, Prov. xix. 2. 'That the soul be without knowledge it is not good.' For any to say though their mind be ignorant, yet their heart is good, they may as well say, though they are blind, yet their eyes are good. In the law, when the plague of leprosy was in a man's head, the priest was to pronounce him unclean: this is the case of an ignorant man, the leprosy is in his head, he is unclean. That heart cannot be very pure which is a dungeon; grace cannot reign where ignorance reigns; an ignorant man can have no love to God; he cannot love that which he doth not know; he can have no faith; knowledge must usher in faith, Psal. ix. 10. he cannot worship God aright, John iv. 22. though he may worship the true God, yet in a wrong manner; ignorance is the root of sin; blindness leads to lasciviousness, Ephes. iv. 18, 19. Prov. vii. 23. Ignorance is the mother of pride, Rev. iii. 17. it is the cause of error, 2 Tim. iii. 6. and, which is worst, an affected ignorance: many are in love with ignorance, they hug their disease, Job xxi. 14. 2 Pet. iii. 5. Ignorant minds are impure, there is no going to heaven in the dark.

2. That heart is impure, which sees no need of purity, Rev. iii. 17. 'I am rich, and have need of nothing.' Not to be sensible of a disease, is worse than the disease; you shall hear a sick man say, I am well, I ail nothing; there are some who need no repentance, Luke xv. 7. Sinners are too well to be cured; heart-purity is as great a wonder to a natural man, as the new birth was to Nicodemus, John iii. 4. It is sad to think how many go on confidently, and are ready to bless themselves, never suspecting their condition till it be too late.

3. He hath an impure heart, who regards iniqui-

ty in his heart, Psal. lxi. 18. 'If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.' In the original it is, If I look upon sin; that is, with a lustful look; sin regarding is inconsistent with heart-purity.

*Quest.* What is it to regard iniquity?

*Ans.* 1. When we indulge sin; when sin not only lives in us, but we live in sin. Some will leave all their sins but one: Jacob would let all his sons go but Benjamin: Satan can hold a man by one sin; the fowler holds the bird fast enough by a wing or claw: others hide their sins, like one that shuts up his shop-windows, but follows his trade within doors: many deal with their sins as Moses' mother dealt with him, she hid him in the ark of bulrushes, as if she had left him quite; but her eye was still upon him, and in conclusion she became his nurse, Exod. ii. 9. So many seem to leave their sins, but they only hide them from the eye of others, their heart still goes after them, and at last they nurse, and give the breast to their sins.

2. To regard iniquity, is to delight in iniquity. A child of God, though he sins, yet he doth not take a complacency in sin, Rom. vii. 15. 'What I hate, that do I;' but impure souls make a recreation of sin, 2 Thess. ii. 12. 'They had pleasure in unrighteousness; never did one feed with more delight on a dish he loves, than a wicked man doth upon the forbidden fruit. This delight shews the will is in the sin.'

3. To regard iniquity, is to lay in provision for sin, Rom. xiii. 14. 'Make not provision for the flesh:' Sinners are caterers for their lusts; it is a metaphor taken from such as make provision for a family, or victual a garrison. The Greek signifies a projecting and forecasting in the mind how to bring a thing about. This is to make provision for the flesh, when one studies to gratify the flesh, and lay

in fuel for lust. Thus Amnon made provision for the flesh, 2 Sam. xiii. 5. he feigns himself sick, and his sister Tamar must be his nurse, she must cook and dress his meat for him, by which means he defiled the breasts of her virginity: it is sad when men's care is not to discharge conscience, but to satisfy lust.

4. To regard iniquity, is to give it respect and intertainment; as Lot shewed respect to the angels, Gen. xix. 2. 'He bowed himself with his face toward the ground, and said, behold now my lords, turn in I pray you,' &c. When the Spirit of God comes, it is repulsed and grieved, but when temptation comes, the sinner bows to it, sets open the great gates, and saith, Turn in my lord; this is to regard iniquity.

5. He is said to regard sin, that doth not regard the threatenings of God against sin. We read of 'seven thunders uttering their voice,' Rev. x. 3. How many thunders in scripture utter their voice against sin, Psal. lxviii. 21. 'God shall wound the hairy scalp of such an one as goes on still in his trespasses.' Here is a thundering scripture, but sinners fear not this thunder; let a minister come as a Bonanerges clothed with the spirit of Elijah, and denounce all the curses of God against mens' sins, they regard it not, they can laugh at the shaking of a spear, Job xli. 29. this is to regard iniquity, and doth argue an impure heart.

4. An unbelieving heart is an impure heart. The scripture calls it expressly 'an evil heart of unbelief,' Heb. iii. 12. An unbelieving heart is evil in the highest degree; it is full of the poison of hell: Unbelief is the root and receptacle of sin.

1. Unbelief is a God-affronting sin. 1. It puts the lie upon God; it calls in question his power, mercy, truth, 1 John v. 10. 'He that believeth not, hath made God a liar.' And can a greater af-

front be cast upon the God of glory? 2. It makes us trust to second causes, which is a setting the creature in the room of God, 2 Chron. xvi. 12. 'Asa in his disease, sought not to the Lord, but to the physicians.' He relied more on the physicians, than upon God. Saul seeks to the witch of Endor. O high affront, to lean upon the reed, and neglect the Rock of ages!

2. Unbelief hardens the heart; these two sins are linked together, Mark xvi. 14. 'He upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart.' Unbelief breeds the stone of the heart; he that believes not God's threatenings, will never fear him; he that believes not God's promises, will never love him. What is said of the leviathan, is true of the unbeliever: Job xli. 24. 'His heart is as firm as a stone.' Unbelief first pollutes the heart, and then hardens it.

3. Unbelief breeds hypocrisy: atheists believe not that God is a jealous God, and will call them to account: therefore it is they put on a mask of religion, and are saints in jest, that they may play the devil in earnest, 2 Tim. iii. 4. They pretend God, but Self is the idol they worship; like bargemen, they look one way, and row another. The unbeliever is the greatest hypocrite.

4. Unbelief causeth the fear of men; fear is a debasing thing, it doth unman a man, it makes him afraid to be good; the fearful man studies rather compliance than conscience, Prov. xxix. 25. 'The fear of man bringeth a snare:' What made Abraham equivocate, David feign himself mad, Peter deny Christ? was it not their fear? and whence doth fear spring, but from unbelief? therefore the scripture joins them together, Rev. xxi. 8. 'The fearful and unbelieving.'

5. Unbelief is the root of apostacy, Heb. iii. 12. 'An evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God.' What is the reason those who seemed

once zealous, now despise prophesying, and leave off prayer in their families? is it not their unbelief? they believe not 'that God is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek him,' Heb. xi. 6. Infidelity is the cause of apostasy; and if infidelity be the breeder and fomentor of so much sin, then the unbelieving heart must needs be an impure heart.

5. A covetous heart is an impure heart; the earth is the most impure element; the purity of the heart lies in the spirituality of it; and what more opposite to spirituality than earthiness? covetousness 'is the root of all evil,' 1 Tim. vi. 10.

1. Covetousness is the root of discontent: why do any repine at their condition, but because they think they have not enough? The Greek for covetousness signifies an immoderate desire of getting; covetousness is a dry dropsy; and because the thirst is not satisfied, therefore the heart frets through discontent and impatience.

2. Covetousness is the root of theft. Achan's covetous humour made him steal that wedge of gold which served to cleave asunder his soul from God, Josh. vii. 21.

3. Covetousness is the root of treason; it made Judas betray Christ, Matt. xxvi. 15. 'What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you?' Absalom's covetousness made him attempt to pluck the crown from his father's head. He that is a Demas, will soon prove a Judas, 2 Tim. iii. 2. 'Men shall be covetous;' and it follows in the next verse, traitors. Where covetousness is in the premises, treason will be in the conclusion.

4. Covetousness is the root of murder. Why did Ahab stone Naboth to death, but to possess the vineyard? 1 Kings xxi. 13. Covetousness hath made many swim to the crown in blood; and can the heart be pure, when the hands are full of blood?

5. Covetousness is the root of perjury, 2 Tim. iii.

3, 3. 'Men shall be covetous;' and it follows, truce-breakers. For love of money men will take a false oath, and break a just oath. He that lives a Midas, will die a perjurer.

6. Covetousness is the root of necromancy: Why do persons indent with the devil but for money? they study the black art for yellow gold: Alexander the sixth pawned his soul to the devil for a popedom.

7. It is the root of fraud and cozenage in dealings: such as would be over-rich, will over-reach; it is the covetous hand holds false weights, Amos viii. 5.

8. Covetousness is the root of bribery and injustice; it makes the courts of judicature places of robbery, as Austin speaks; at Athens, causes were bought and sold for money.

9. It is the cause of uncleanness. The scripture mentions the hire of an whore, Deut. xxiii. 18. For money, both conscience and chastity are set to sale.

10. Covetousness is the root of idolatry, Col. iii. 5. 'Covetousness, which is idolatry.' The covetous person bows down to the image of gold. His money is his god, for he puts his trust in it. Money is his Creator; when he hath abundance of wealth, then he thinks he is made; it is his Redeemer; if he be in any state or trouble, he flies to his money, and that must redeem him; it is his Comforter; when he is sad, he tells over his money, and with this golden harp he drives away the evil spirit; when you see a covetous man, you may say, There goes an idolater.

11. Covetousness is the cause of unprofitableness under the means: in the parable, the thorns choked the seed, Matt. xiii. 7. This is the reason the word preached doth not more good; the seed oft falls among thorns; thousands of sermons lie buried in earthly hearts.

12. Covetousness is the root of penuriousness and baseness, it hinders hospitality; a covetous man hath a withered hand, he cannot reach it out to clothe or feed such as are in want. The covetous person is so sordid, that if his estate may flourish, he is content to let his name lie dead and buried: what a cursed sin is avarice? and can he be pure in heart, that hath such a root of bitterness growing in him? we may as well say the wine is pure which runs dregs, or the body is pure which is full of plague-spots.

6. Those hearts are impure who are haters of purity, Mic. iii. 2, 'who hate the good,' Prov. i. 29. 'They hated knowledge.' Some things in nature have an antipathy; the serpent will not come near the boughs of the wild ash. There is an antipathy in a carnal heart against holiness; and when hatred is boiled up to malice, it is dangerous. Thus Julian did maliciously oppose holiness, and made war against the Persians, and receiving a mortal wound through his armour, he threw up a handful of his blood into the air in indignation, saying, Thou Galilean, hast thou overcome me?

7. He that derides purity, hath an impure heart, Luke xvi. 14. 2 Pet. iii. 3. 'There shall come in the last days scoffers.' There are some that make a jeer of religion; These are, say they, your holy brethren! it is a sign of an Ishmael spirit to scoff at holiness; are we not commanded to be 'perfect as God is?' Matt. v. ult. One would wonder that those who dare open their mouths in derision against holiness, the earth doth not open her mouth to swallow them up as it did Korah and Dathan. These are devils covered over with flesh; they have damnation written on their foreheads. Lucian, who in the time of the emperor Trajan had professed religion, afterwards became so profane as to make a mock at the



Christians, and by his jeers and taunts went about to rend religion, at last he himself was rent asunder, and devoured by dogs. When the scab of the leper did appear, he was to be shut out of the camp, Lev. xiii. 9. Those who flout at religion, if God give them not repentance, are sure to be shut out of the camp of heaven.

#### SECT. 4.

##### *Shewing the Signs of a pure Heart.*

I shall next shew you the signs of a pure heart.

1. A sincere heart is a pure heart, Psal. xxxii. 2. 'In whose spirit there is no guile.' There are four characters of a sincere hearted Christian. 1. A sincere heart serves God with the whole heart.

First. He serves God with the heart. The hypocrite doth but make a shew of obedience, Jer. xii. 2. 'Thou art near in their mouth, and far from their reins;' there may be a fair complexion, when the lungs and vitals are rotten. The hypocrite is fair to look on, he hath a devout eye, but a hollow heart; but he who is sincere, his inside is his best side. In the law God would have the inwards offered up, Lev. iv. 11. A good Christian gives God the inwards; when he prays his heart prays, 1 Sam. i. 18. 'Hannah prayed in her heart.'—In his thanksgivings the heart is the chief instrument of praise, Psal. cxi. 1. Then is the sweetest music when we 'make melody in our hearts to the Lord,' Col. iii. 16.

Secondly, The sincere Christian serves God with the whole heart, Psal. cxix. 2. Hypocrites have a double heart, Psal. xii. 2. An heart for God, and an heart for sin, Hos. x. 2. 'Their heart is divided;' God loves a broken heart, but not a divided heart; an upright heart is a whole heart; the full

stream and torrent of the affections runs out after God; a sincere heart follows God fully, Numb. xiv. 24.

2. A sincere heart is willing to come under a trial, Psal. cxxxix. 23. 'Search me, O God, and try me;' that metal is to be suspected which men are afraid to bring to the touchstone; a sound heart likes the touchstone of the word; he is for a searching ministry. Hypocrites fly from that light which would discover sin; they hate that physic of the word which, meeting with their ill humours, begins to make them sick, and troubles their conscience. A gracious soul loves that preaching best which makes an heart anatomy.

3dly. A sincere heart dares not act in the least against his conscience; he is the most magnanimous, yet the most pusillanimous; he is bold in suffering, Prov. xxviii. 1. but fearful of sin, Gen. xxxix. 9. He dares not get an estate by sinful shifts, or rise upon the ruins of another. Jacob got his father's blessing by fraud; but that is not the way to get God's blessing.

4thly. A sincere heart is a suspicious heart. The hypocrite suspects others, and hath charitable thoughts of himself; the sincere Christian hath charitable thoughts of others, and suspects himself; he calls himself often to account, O my soul, hast thou any evidences for heaven? are they not to seek when they should be to shew? is there no flaw in thy evidences? thou mayest mistake common grace for saving. Weeds in the corn fields look like flowers. The foolish virgins' lamps looked as if they had oil in them; O my soul, is it not so with thee? The sincere soul being ever jealous, plays the critic upon himself, and doth so traverse things in the court of conscience, as if he were presently to be cited to God's bar. This is to be pure in heart.

2. A pure heart breathes after purity. If God

should stretch out the golden sceptre, and say to him, 'Ask, and it shall be given thee, to half the kingdom;' he would say, Lord, a pure heart; let my heart have this inscription, 'Holiness to the Lord;' let my heart be thy temple, and do thou dwell in it. Lord, what should I do in heaven with this unholy heart? what converse could I have with God or angels? A gracious soul is so in love with purity, that he prizeth a pure heart above all blessings.

1. Above riches; he knows he may be clothed in purple and fine linen, and yet go to hell; he is content to be poor, so he may be pure; he knows heart-purity is a special certificate of God's love, 'the pure in heart shall see God.'

2. Above gifts; Gifts do not at all set us off in God's eye; a pure heart is the jewel, Matt. xv. 28. 'O woman great is thy faith!' It was not her rhetorical language Christ was taken with, but her faith. Hypocrites have had rare gifts; Saul had the spirit of prophecy; Judas no doubt could make an elegant oration. Hypocrites have come into God's church loaden with Egyptian gold, human learning; there may be illumination without sanctification. A small diamond is better than a great deal of brass: A little grace excels the most flourishing parts. Now if the outgoings of thy soul are after holiness, thou desirest rather a pure heart, than an eloquent tongue; thou hast the oil of the Spirit poured on thee, and thou shalt be crowned with a sight of God.

3. A pure heart abhors all sin: A man may forbear and forsake sin, yet not have a pure heart.

1. He may forbear sin; as one may hold his breath while he dives under water, and then take breath again: and a man may forbear sin, 1. For want of occasion; the gunpowder makes no noise till the fire be put to it; the clock stands still till

the weights are put on. Let a tentation come, which is like the hanging on of the weights, and the heart goes as fast in sin as ever. 2. He may forbear sin for fear. A man forbears a dish he loves, for fear it should bring his disease upon him of the stone or gout. There is a conflict in a sinner between the passion of desire and fear. Desire spurs him on to sin, but fear as a curben-bit checks him; nor is it the crookedness of the serpent he fears, but the sting of the serpent. 3. He may forbear sin out of a design; he hath a plot in hand, and his sin might spoil his plot. Some rich heir would fly out in excess, but he carries it fair to prevent a cutting off the entail. How good was Joash while Jehoiada the priest lived? prudence as well as conscience may restrain from sin.

2. A man may forsake sin; yet not have a pure heart; it is a great matter I confess to forsake sin; so dear is sin to men, that they will part with the fruit of their body for the sin of their souls. Sin is the Delilah that doth bewitch, and it is much to see men divorced from it; this is some fruit of the ministry to civilize; but there may be a forsaking of sin, yet no heart purity; sin may be forsaken upon wrong principles, 1. From morality. Moral arguments may suppress sin; I have read of a debauched heathen, who hearing Socrates read an ethic lecture of virtue and vice, (though he came with a purpose to deride Socrates,) yet he went away changed, and did no more follow his former exorbitances. Cato, Seneca, Aristides, seeing a beauty in virtue, did lead unblameable lives. 2. From policy. A man may forsake sin, not out of respect to God's glory, but his own credit. Vice will waste his estate, eclipse the honour of his family, therefore out of policy he will divorce his sin. 3. From necessity. Perhaps he can now follow the trade of sin no longer; the adulterer is grown old,

the drunkard poor; his heart is to sin, but either his purse fails him, or his strength; as a man that loves hunting, but his prison-fetters will not suffer him to follow the sport. This man who is necessitated to put a stop to sin, doth not so much forsake sin, as sin forsakes him.

But now he is pure in God's eye who abhors sin, Psal. cxix. 104. 'I hate every false way.' This is excellent indeed, because now the love of sin is crucified. A hypocrite may leave sin, yet love it; as the serpent casts her coat, yet keeps her sting; but when a man can say he abhors sin, now sin is killed in the root; a pure heart abstains from sin, as a man doth from a dish that he hath an antipathy against. This is a sign of a new nature, when a man hates what once he loved; and because he hates sin, therefore he fights against it with the sword of the Spirit; as a man that hates a serpent seeks the destruction of it.

4. A pure heart avoids the appearance of evil, 1 Thess. v. 22. Abstain from all shew of evil. A pure heart avoids that which may be interpreted evil: he that is loyal to his prince, not only forbears to have his hand in treason, but he takes heed of that which hath a shew of treason. A gracious heart is shy of that which looks like sin: when Joseph's mistress took hold of him, and said, Lie with me, he left his garment in her hand, and fled from her, Gen. xxxix. 12. He avoided the appearance of evil, he would not be seen in her company. Now a pure heart avoids whatever may have the suspicion of sin.

1. In regard of himself, and that two ways. 1. Because the appearance of evil is oft-times an occasion of evil. Effeminate dalliance is an appearance of evil, and many times occasions evil. Had Joseph been familiar with his mistress in a wanton, sporting manner, he might in time have been drawn to

commit folly with her. Some out of novelty and curiosity have gone to hear mass, and afterwards have lent the idol not only their ear, but their knee. In our times are there not many who have gone with itching ears into sectarian company, and have come home with the plague in their head? when Dinah would be gadding, she lost her chastity, Gen. xxxiv. 2. A pure heart foreseeing the danger, avoids the appearance of evil: it is dangerous to go near an hornet's nest. The men who went near the furnace were burned, Dan. iii. 22. 2. Because the appearance of evil may eclipse his good name. A good name is a precious ointment, it is better than fine gold, Prov. xxii. 1. It commends us to God and angels, which riches cannot do. Now a godly man avoids the appearance of evil, lest he wound his good name; what comfort can there be of life, when the name lies buried?

2. A pure heart avoids the suspicion of sin out of reverence and respect to the holiness of God. God hates the very appearance of evil: God abhors hypocrites, because they have no more than the appearance of good; and he is angry with his children, because they have so much as the appearance of evil. A gracious heart knows God is a jealous God, and cannot endure that his people should border upon sin, therefore he keeps aloof off, and will not come near the smell of infection.

3. A pure heart avoids the shew of sin in regard of the godly. The appearance of evil may scandalize a weak brother: a gracious heart is not only fearful lest he should defile his own conscience, but lest he should offend his brother's conscience; were it only in a thing indifferent, yet if it be an appearance of evil, and may grieve another, we are to forbear: for 'when we sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, we sin against Christ,'

1 Cor. viii. 12. The weak Christian is a member of Christ, therefore the sinning against a member, is a sinning against Christ.

4. A pure heart avoids the very appearance of evil in regard of the wicked. The apostle would have us walk wisely 'towards them that are without,' 1 Thess. iv. 12. The wicked watch for our halting; how glad would they be of any thing to reproach religion? professors are placed as stars in the highest orb of the church; and if there be but the appearance of any eccentric or irregular motion, the wicked would presently open their mouths with a fresh cry against religion. Now, to a godly heart the fame and honour of the gospel is so dear, that he had rather die than impeach or eclipse it; by this then let us try ourselves whether we are pure in heart: do we avoid the least appearance of sin? alas, how many run themselves into the occasions of sin? they tempt the devil to tempt them; some go to masquerades and comedies, the very fuel and tentation to lust: others frequent erroneous meetings; and truly, God oft in just judgment, leaves them to the acts of sin, that do not avoid the appearance of sin, Psal. cvi. 35. 'They were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works.' Pure hearts fly the occasion: John would not endure the company of Cerinthus in the bath, as Nicephorus notes. Polycarp would have no conference with Marcion the heretic, but called him the devil's first-born. Basil saith, that the Christians in his time avoided the meetings of sectaries, as the very schools of error: oh, avoid the appearance of evil; the apostle bids us to follow those things which are of good report, Phil. iv. 8.

5. A pure heart performs holy duties in an holy manner. This holy manner, or due order, consists in three things.

1. Preparing the heart before a duty: an unholy

heart cares not how it rusheth upon an ordinance; it comes without preparation, and goes away without profit: the pure heart is a prepared heart; it dresseth itself before it comes to a duty, by examination and ejaculation; when the earth is prepared, then it is fit to receive the seed; when the instrument is prepared and tuned, it is fit for music.

2. Watching the heart in a duty: an holy heart labours to be affected and wrought upon, his heart burns within him. There was no sacrifice without fire; a pure saint labours to have his heart broken in a duty, Psal. li. 17. The incense when it was broken, did cast the sweetest savour. Impure souls care not in what a dead perfunctory manner they serve God, Ezek. xxxiii. 31. They pray more out of fashion than out of faith. They are no more affected with an ordinance, than the tombs of the church. God complains of offering up the blind, Mal. i. 8. and is it not as bad to offer up the dead; O Christian, say to thyself, how can this deadness of heart stand with pureness of heart? do not dead things putrify?

3. Outward reverence: Purity of heart will express itself by the reverend gesture of the body, the lifting up of the eye and hand, the uncovering the head, the bending the knee. Constantine the emperor did bear great reverence to the word. When God gave the law, the 'mount was on fire, and trembled,' Exod. xix. 18. The reason was, that the people might prostrate themselves more reverently before the Lord. The ark, wherein the law was put, was carried upon bars, that the Levites might not touch it, Exod. xxv. 11, 14. to shew what reverence God would have about holy things. Sitting in prayer, (unless in case of weakness) and having the hat half on in prayer, is a very indecent, irreverent practice; let such as are guilty reform it. We must not only offer up our souls, but our bodies, Rom. xii. 1. The Lord takes notice what posture



and gesture we use in his worship: if a man were to deliver a petition to the king, would he deliver it with his hat half on? the careless irreverence of some would make us think they did not much regard whether God heard them or not. We are run from one extreme to another; from superstition to unmannerliness. Let Christians think of the dreadful majesty of God who is present: Gen. xxviii. 17. 'How dreadful is this place? this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.' The blessed angels 'cover their faces, crying, Holy, holy,' Isa. vi. 1. An holy heart will have an holy gesture.

6. A pure heart will have a pure life, 2 Cor. vii. 1. 'Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.' Where there is a good conscience, there will be a good conversation. Some bless God they have good hearts, but their lives are evil, Prov. xxx. 12. 'There is a generation that is pure in their own eyes, and yet are not washed from their filthiness.' If the stream be corrupt, we may suspect the spring-head to be impure. Aaron was called the 'saint of the Lord,' Psal. cvi. 16. He had not only an holy heart, but there was a golden plate on his forehead, on which was written 'holiness to the Lord.' Purity must not only be woven into the heart, but engraven upon the life. Grace is most beautiful when it shines abroad with its golden beams. The clock hath not only its motion within, but the finger moves without upon the dial: pureness of heart shews itself upon the dial of the conversation.

1. A pure soul talks of God, Psal. xxxvii. 80. His heart is seen in his tongue; the Latins call the roof of the mouth heaven. He that is pure in heart, his mouth is full of heaven.

2. He walks with God, Gen. vi. 9. He is still

doing angels' work; praising God, serving God; he lives as Christ did upon earth. Holy duties are the Jacob's ladder by which he is still ascending to heaven. Purity of heart and life are in scripture made twins; Ezek. xxxvi. 27. 'I will put my Spirit within them;' there is purity of heart; 'and they shall walk in my statutes;' there is purity of life. Shall we account them pure, whose conversation is not in heaven, but rather in hell? Mic. vi. 11. 'Shall I count them pure with the wicked balances, and with the bag of deceitful weights?' how justly may others reproach religion, when they see it kicked down with our unholy feet! a pure heart hath a golden frontispiece; grace, like new wine, will have vent; it can no more be concealed than lost. The saints are called jewels, Mal. iii. because of that shining lustre they cast in the eyes of others.

7. A pure heart is so in love with purity, that nothing can draw him off from it.

1. Let others reproach purity, he loves it; as David when he danced before the ark, and Michal scoffed; 'if,' saith he, 'this be to be vile, I will yet be more vile,' 2 Sam. vi. 22. So saith a pure heart, If to follow after holiness be to be vile, I will yet be more vile. Let water be sprinkled upon the fire, it burns the more: the more others deride holiness, the more doth a gracious soul burn in love and zeal to it. If a man had an inheritance befallen him, would he be laughed out of it? what is a Christian the worse for another's reproach; it is not a blind man's disparaging a diamond, that makes it sparkle the less.

2. Let others persecute holiness, a pure heart will pursue it. Holiness is the queen every gracious soul is espoused to, and he will rather die than be divorced. Paul would be holy, though bonds and persecution did abide him, Acts xx. 23. The way

of religion is oft thorny and bloody; but a gracious heart prefers inward purity before outward peace. I have heard of one who having a jewel he much prized, the king sent for his jewel; Tell the king, saith he, I honour his majesty, but I will rather lose my life than part with my jewel. He who is enriched with the jewel of holiness, will rather die than part with this jewel: when his honour and riches will do him no good, his holiness will stand him instead, Rom. vi. 22. 'Ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.'

### SECT. 5.

#### *Exhorting to heart-purity.*

*Use 3. Exhort.* Let me persuade Christians to heart-purity; the harlot wipes her mouth, Prov. xxx. 20. But that is not enough, 'wash thy heart O Jerusalem,' Jer. iv. 14. And here I shall lay down some arguments or motives to persuade to heart purity.

1. The necessity of heart-purity; it is necessary:

1. In respect of ourselves: till the heart be pure, all our holy things are polluted; they are *splendida peccata*: Tit. i. 15. 'To the unclean all things are unclean;' their offering is unclean. Under the law, if a man who was unclean by a dead body, did carry a piece of holy flesh in his skirt, the holy flesh could not cleanse him, but he polluted that; Hag. ii. 12, 13. He who had the leprosy, whatever he touched was unclean; if he had touched the altar or sacrifice, the altar had not cleansed him, but he had defiled the altar; a foul hand defiles the purest water: an impure heart defiles prayers, sacraments; he drops poison upon all. A pure stream running through muddy ground is polluted; the holiest or-

dinances are stained running through an impure heart. A sinner's works are called dead works, Heb. vi. 1. and those works which are dead, cannot please God; a dead wife cannot please her husband.

2. Heart-purity is necessary in respect of God: God is holy; purity is the chief robe wherewith God himself is clothed, Hab. i. 13. 'Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil: and will this holy God endure to have an impure heart come near him? will a man lay a viper in his bosom? the holy God and the sinner cannot dwell together. None can dwell together but friends; but there is no friendship between God and the sinner, both of them being of a contrary judgment and disposition. An impure heart is more odious to God than a serpent; God gave the serpent its venom, but Satan fills the heart with sin, Acts v. 3. 'Why hath Satan filled thine heart?' The Lord abhors a sinner, he will not come near him, having his plague-sores running, Zech. xi. 8. 'My soul loathed them.'

3. Heart purity is necessary in regard of the angels; they are pure creatures: the cherubims, which typified the angels, were made of fine gold, to denote the purity of their essence; no unholy thought enters into the angels; therefore there must be purity of heart, that there may be some resemblance between us and them. What should unholy hearts do among those pure angelic spirits?

4. In regard of the saints glorified. They are pure, being refined from all lees and dregs of sin. Their title is, 'spirits of just men made perfect,' Heb. xii. 23. Now what should profane spirits do among spirits made perfect? I tell you, if you who wallow in your sins could come near God and angels, and spirits of men made perfect, and have a sight of their lustre, you would soon wish yourselves out of their company; as a man that is dirty, and in his rags, if he should stand before the king and

his nobles, and see them glistening in their cloth of gold, and sparkling with their jewels, he would be ashamed of himself and wish himself out of their presence.

5. There must be heart-purity in regard of heaven: heaven is a pure place, it is 'an inheritance undefiled,' 1 Pet. i. 4. No unclean beasts come into the heavenly ark; there shall not enter into it 'any thing that defileth,' Rev. xxi. 27. The Lord will not put the new wine of glory into a musty, impure heart: all which considered, shows the necessity of heart-purity.

2. It is the will of God that we should be pure in heart, 1 Thess. iv. 3. 'This is the will of God, your sanctification.' Are you low in the world? perhaps it is not the will of God that you should be rich; but it is the will of God that you should be holy; 'This is the will of God, your sanctification.' Let God have his will by being holy, and you shall have your will in being happy. God's will must either be fulfilled by us, or upon us.

2. Purity of heart is the characteristical note of God's people, Psal. lxxiii. 1. 'God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart.' Heart-purity denominates us the Israel of God. It is not profession which makes us the Israel of God; it makes us of Israel indeed; but 'all are not Israel which are of Israel,' Rom. ix. 6. Purity of heart is the jewel which is hung only upon the elect. As chastity distinguisheth a virtuous woman from an harlot, so the true saint is distinguished from the hypocrite by his heart-purity. This is like the nobleman's star or garter, which is a peculiar ensign of honour, differing him from the vulgar; when the bright star of purity shineth in a Christian's heart, it doth distinguish him from a formal professor.

4. Purity of heart: makes us like God; it was Adam's unhappiness once, he aspired to be like

God in omniscieney; but we must endeavour to be like God in sanctity. God's image consists in holiness; those who have not his image and superscription upon them, he will say, 'I know you not.' God delights in no heart but where he may see his own face, and likeness. You cannot see your face in a glass when it is dusty: God's face cannot be seen in a dusty impure soul; a pure heart, like a clean glass, gives some idea and representation of God. There is little comfort in being like God in other things besides purity. Are we like God in that we have a being? so have stones; are we like him in that we have motion? so have stars; are we like him in that we have life? so have trees and birds; are we like him in that we have knowledge? so have devils; there is no likeness to God will prove comfortable and blissful, but our being like him in purity; God loves the pure in heart; love is founded upon likeness.

5. The excellency of the heart lies in the purity of it. Purity was the glory of the soul in innocency; the purer a thing is, the better; the purer the air is, and the more free from noxious vapours, the better it is; the spirits of water distilled are most precious; the purer the gold is, the more valuable; the purer the wine is when it is taken off from the lees and dregs, the more excellent it is; the more the soul is clarified by grace, and taken off from the lees and dregs of sin, the more precious account God makes of it; the purer the heart is, the more spiritual it is; and the more spiritual, the more fit to entertain him who is a spirit.

6. God is good to the pure in heart, Psal. lxxiii.

1. 'God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart.' We all desire that God should be good to us; it is the sick man's prayer, 'the Lord be good to me.' God is good to such as are of a clean

*Quest.* But how is God good to them?

*Ans.* Two ways. 1. To them that are pure, all things are sanctified, Titus i. 15. 'To the pure all things are pure:' estate is sanctified, relations are sanctified; as the temple did sanctify the gold, and the altar did sanctify the offering. To the unclean nothing is clean; their table is a snare, their temple-devotion is sin. There is a curse entailed upon a wicked man, Deut. xxviii. 16. but holiness removeth the curse, and cuts off the entail; 'to the pure all things are pure.' 2. The pure-hearted have all things working for their good, Rom. viii. 28. Mercies and afflictions shall turn to their good; the most poisonous drugs shall be medicinal; the most cross Providence shall carry on the design of their salvation; who then would not be pure in heart? 'God is good to such as are of a clean heart.'

7. Heart-purity makes way for heaven; the pure in heart shall see God. Happiness is nothing but the quintessence of holiness; purity of heart is heaven begun in a man; holiness is called in scripture 'the anointing of God,' 1 John ii. 27. Solomon was first anointed with the holy oil, and then he was made king, 1 Kings i. 39. The people of God are first anointed with the oil of the Spirit, and made pure in heart, and then the crown of glory is set upon their head; and is not purity to be highly valued? it lays a train for glory; purity of heart, and seeing of God, are linked together.

8. The examples of those who have been eminent for heart-purity; the Lord Jesus was a pattern of purity, John viii. 46. 'Which of you convinceth me of sin?' in this we are to imitate Christ; we are not to imitate him in raising the dead, or in working miracles, but in being holy, 1 Peter i. 16.—Besides this golden pattern of Christ, we are to write after the fair copy of those saints who have been of a dove-like purity. David was so pure in

heart, that he was a man after God's heart; Abraham so purified by faith, that he was one of God's cabinet-council, Gen. xviii. 17. Moses so holy, that God spake with him face to face; what were the rest of the patriarchs, but so many plants of renown flourishing in holiness? The fathers in the primitive church were exemplary for purity; Gregory Nazianzene, Basil, Augustine, they were so inlaid and adorned with purity, that envy itself could not tax them; therefore as Cæsar wished he had such soldiers as were in the time of Alexander the Great; so we may wish we had such saints as were in the primitive times; so just were they in their dealings, so decent in their attire, so true in their promises, so devout in their religion, so unblameable in their lives, that they were living sermons, walking Bibles, real pictures of Christ, and did help to keep up the credit of godliness in the world.

9. Heart-purity is the only jewel you can carry out of the world; hast thou a child thou delightest in, or an estate? you can 'carry nothing out of the world,' 1 Tim. vi. 7. Purity of heart is the only commodity can be with comfort transported, this is that will stay longest with you; usually we love those things that will last longest; we prize a diamond or piece of gold above the most beautiful flower, because fading; heart-purity hath perpetuity; it will go with us beyond the grave.

#### SECT. 6.

##### *Means for heart-purity.*

But how shall we attain to heart-purity?

1. Often look into the word of God, John xv.
3. 'Now ye are clean through the word.' Ps. cxix. 140. 'Thy word is very pure:' God's word is pure, not only for the matter of it, but the effect, because it makes us pure: John xvii. 17. 'Sanctify



them through thy truth, thy word is truth.' By looking into this pure crystal we are changed into the image of it; the word is both a glass to shew us the spots of our souls, and a laver to wash them away; the word breathes nothing but purity; it irradiates the mind, it consecrates the heart.

2. Go to the bath: There are two baths Christians should wash in,

1. The bath of tears: go into this bath; Peter had sullied and defiled himself with sin, and he washed himself with penitential tears. Mary Magdalene, who was an impure sinner, 'stood at Jesus' feet weeping,' Luke vii. 38. Mary's tears did wash her heart, as well as Christ's feet. Oh Sinners, let your eyes be a fountain of tears; weep for those sins which are so many, as have passed all arithmetic; this water of contrition is healing and purifying.

2. The bath of Christ's blood; this is that 'fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness,' Zech. xiii.

1. A soul steeped in the brinish tears of repentance, and bathed in the blood of Christ, is made pure; all the legal washings and purifications were but types and emblems representing Christ's blood; this blood lays the soul a whitening.

3. Get Faith: it is a soul cleansing grace, Acts xv. 9, 'Having purified their hearts by faith.' The woman in the gospel, that did but touch the hem of Christ's garment was healed; a touch of faith heals. If I believe Christ and all his merits are mine, how can I sin against him? we do not willingly injure those friends which we believe love us; nothing can have a greater force and efficacy upon the heart to make it pure, than faith; faith will remove mountains; the mountains of pride, lust, envy; faith and the love of sin are inconsistent.

4. Breathe after the Spirit; it is called the holy Spirit, Eph. i. 13. It purgeth the heart, as light-

ning purgeth the air: that we may see what a purifying virtue the Spirit hath, it is compared,

1. To fire, Acts ii. 3. Fire is of a purifying nature; it doth refine and cleanse metals; it separates the dross from the gold; the Spirit of God in the heart doth refine and sanctify it; it burns up the dross of sin.

2. The Spirit is compared to wind, Acts ii. 2. 'There came a sound from heaven as of a mighty rushing wind, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.' The wind doth purify the air; when the air by reason of foggy vapours is unwholesome, the wind is a fan to winnow and purify it. Thus when the vapours of sin arise in the heart, vapours of pride and covetousness, earthly vapours, the Spirit of God ariseth and blows upon the soul, and so purgeth away these impure vapours. The spouse in the Canticles prays for a gale of the Spirit, that she might be made pure, Cant. iv. 16.

3. The Spirit is compared to water, John vii. 38, 39. 'He that believeth on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water, but thus spake he of the Spirit:' the Spirit is like water, not only to make the soul fruitful, for it causeth the desert to blossom as the rose, Isa. xxxii. 15. But the Spirit is like water to purify; whereas before the heart of a sinner was unclean, and whatever he touched had a tincture of impurity, Numb. xix. 22. when once the Spirit comes into the heart, it doth, with its continual showers and lavers, wash off the filthiness of it, making it pure, and fit for the God of spirits to dwell in.

5. Take heed of familiar converse and intercourse with the wicked. One vain mind makes another; one hard heart makes another; the stone in the body is not infectious, but the stone in the heart

is. One profane spirit poisons another; beware of the society of the wicked.

*Quest.* But what hurt is in this? did not Jesus Christ converse with sinners? Luke v. 29.

*Ans.* 1. There was a necessity for that: if Jesus Christ had not come among sinners, how could any have been saved? he went among sinners, not to join with them in their sins, but to heal them of their sins. He was not a companion of sinners, but a physician of sinners.

2. Though Christ did converse with sinners, he could not be polluted with their sin; his divine nature was a sufficient antidote to preserve him from infection. Christ could be no more defiled with their sin, than the sun is defiled by shining on a dung-hill. Sin could no more stick on Christ, than a bur on a glass of crystal; the soil of his heart was so pure, that no viper of sin could breed there. But the case is altered with us; we have a stock of corruption within, and the least thing will increase this stock; therefore it is dangerous mingling ourselves among the wicked. If we would be pure in heart, let us shun their society. He that would preserve his garment clean, avoids the dirt; the wicked are the mire, Isa. lvii. 20. The fresh waters running among the salt, taste brackish.

6. If you would be pure, walk with them that are pure; as the communion of saints is in our creed, so it should be in our company, Prov. xiii. 20. 'He that walketh with the wise shall be wise;' and he that walketh with the pure shall be pure. The saints are like a bed of spices; by intermixing ourselves with them we shall partake of their savouriness; association begets assimilation; sometimes God blesseth good society to the conversion of others.

7. Wait at the posts of wisdom's doors; reverence the word preached; the word of God sucked in by faith, transforms the heart into the likeness

of it, Rom. vi. 17. The word is an holy seed, Jam. i. 18. which being cast into the heart, makes it partake of the divine nature.

8. Pray for heart-purity: Job propounds the question, 'Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?' God can do it; out of an impure heart he can produce grace; make that prayer of David, Psal. li. 10. 'Create in me a clean heart, O God.' Most men pray more for full purses, than for pure hearts; we should pray for heart-purity fervently; it is a matter we are most nearly concerned in; 'without holiness no man shall see the Lord.' Our prayers must be with sighs and groans, Rom. viii. There must not only be elocution, but affection. Jacob wrestled in prayer, Gen. xxxii. 24. Hannah poured out her soul, 1 Sam. i. 15. We oft pray so coldly, (our petitions even freezing to our lips) as if we would teach God to deny: we pray as if we cared not whether God heard us or no. O Christian, be earnest with God for a pure heart; lay thy heart before the Lord, and say 'Lord, thou who hast given me an heart, give me a pure heart. My heart is good for nothing as it is, it defiles every thing it toucheth. Lord, I am not fit to live with this heart, for I cannot honour thee; nor to die with it, for I cannot see thee;' oh purge me with hysop; let Christ's blood be sprinkled upon me, let the Holy Ghost descend upon me, 'Create in me a clean heart, O God.' Thou who biddest me give thee my heart, Lord make my heart pure, and thou shalt have it.

Matt. v. 8. *They shall see God.*

## CHAP. XVII.

*The blessed Privilege of seeing God explained.*

**T**HESE words are linked to the former, and they are a great incentive to heart-purity; the pure heart shall see the pure God. There is a double sight which the saints have of God.

1. In this life; that is spiritually, by the eye of faith. Faith sees God's glorious attributes in the glass of his word; faith beholds him shewing forth himself through the lattice of his ordinances. Thus Moses did 'see him who was invisible,' Heb. xi. 27. Believers do see God's glory as it were veiled over, they behold his back-parts, Exod xxiii. 33.

2. In the life to come; and this glorious sight of God is meant in the text, 'they shall see God:' a pleasant prospect! this divines call the beatifical vision; at that day the veil will be pulled off, and God will shew himself in all his glory to the soul; as a king on a day of coronation shews himself in all his royalty and magnificence: this sight of God will be the heaven of heaven; we shall indeed have a sight of angels, and that will be sweet; but the quintessence of happiness, and the diamond in the ring will be this, 'We shall see God.' If the sun be absent, it is night for all the stars. The angels are called stars, Job xxxviii. 7. But it would be night in heaven if the Sun of Righteousness did not shine there; it is the king's presence makes the court; Absalom counted himself but half alive, unless he might see the king's face:—'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.'—This sight of God in glory is, 1. Partly mental and intellectual; we shall see him with the eyes of our mind. If there

be not an intellectual sight of God, how do the 'spirits of just men made perfect' see him? 2. Partly corporeal; not that we can with bodily eyes behold the bright essence of God. Indeed the Anthropomorphites and Vorstians erroneously held that God had a visible shape and figure; as man was made God's image, so they thought God was made in man's image, but God is a spirit, John iv. 24. and being a spirit, is invisible, 1 Tim. i. 17. He cannot be beheld by bodily eyes; 'whom no man hath seen, nor can see,' 1 Tim. vi. 16. A sight of his glory would overwhelm us; this wine is too strong for our weak heads.

But when I say our seeing of God in heaven is corporeal, my meaning is, we shall with bodily eyes behold Jesus Christ, through whom the glory of God, his wisdom, holiness, mercy, shall shine forth to the soul. Put a back of steel to the glass, and you may see a face in it; so the human nature of Christ is as it were a back of steel, through which we may see the glory of God; in this sense that scripture is to be understood, Job xix. 26. 'With these eyes shall I see God.'

SECT. 1.

*Setting forth the excellency of the Beatifical Vision.*

Now concerning this blessed sight of God, it is so sublime and sweet, that I can but draw a dark shadow of it; we shall better understand it when we come to heaven; only at present I shall lay down these nine aphorisms or maxims.

1. Our sight of God in heaven shall be a transparent sight; here we see him 'through a glass darkly,' 1 Cor. xiii. 12. But through Christ we shall behold him in a very illustrious manner; God will so far unvail himself, and shew forth his glory,

as the soul is capable to receive; if Adam had not sinned, yet it is probable he should never have had such a clear sight of God as the saints in glory shall, 1 John xii. 2. 'We shall see him as he is;' now we see him as he is not; he is not mutable, not mortal; there we shall see him as he is, in a very transparent manner; 'Then shall I know, even as also I am known,' 1 Cor. xiii. 12. that is, clearly. Doth not God know us clearly and fully? then shall the saints know him (according to their capacity) as they are known; as their love to God, so their sight of God shall be perfect.

2. This sight of God will be a transcendent sight, it will surpass in glory; such glittering beams shall sparkle forth from the Lord Jesus, as shall infinitely amaze and delight the eyes of the beholders. Imagine what a blessed sight it will be to see Christ wearing the robe of our human nature, and to see that nature sitting in glory above the angels. If God be so beautiful here in his ordinances, word, prayer, sacraments; if there be such excellency in him when we see him by the eye of faith through the prospective glass of a promise, O what will it be when we shall see him face to face! When Christ was transfigured on the mount, he was full of glory, Matt. xvii. If his transfiguration was so glorious, what will his inaguration be? what a glorious time will it be, when, as it was said of Mordecai, we shall see him in the presence of his Father, 'arrayed in royal apparel, and with a great crown of gold upon his head,' Esth. viii. 15. There will be glory beyond hyperbole; if the sun were ten thousand times brighter than it is, it could not so much as shadow out this glory; in the heavenly horizon we shall behold beauty in its first magnitude and highest elevation; there we shall 'see the King in his glory,' Isa. xxxiii. 17. All lights are but eclipses compared

with that glorious vision; Apelles' pencil would blot, angels tongues would but disparage it.

3. This sight of God will be a transforming sight, 1 John iii. 2. 'We shall be like him:' the saints shall be changed into glory; as when the light springs into a dark room, the room may be said to be changed from what it was. The saints shall so see God, as to be changed into his image, Psal. xvii. ult. Here God's people are blacked and sullied with infirmities, but in heaven they shall be as the dove, 'covered with silver wings;' they shall have some rays and beams of God's glory shining in them; as a man that rolls himself in the snow, is of a snow-like whiteness; as the crystal, by having the sun shine on it, sparkles and looks like the sun, so the saints, by beholding the brightness of God's glory, shall have a tincture of that glory upon them; not that they shall partake of God's very essence; for as the iron in the fire becomes fire, yet remains iron still, so the saints by beholding the lustre of God's majesty, shall be glorious creatures, but yet creatures still.

4. This sight of God will be a joyful sight, Acts ii. 28. 'Thou shalt make me glad with the light of thy countenance.' After a sharp winter, how pleasant will it be to see the Sun of Righteousness displaying himself in all his glory! Doth faith breed joy? 1 Pet. i. 8. 'In whom though now ye see him not, yet believing ye rejoice with joy unspeakable.' If the joy of FAITH be such, what will the joy of VISION be? the sight of Christ will amaze the eye with wonder, and ravish the heart with joy. If the face of a friend whom we entirely love doth so affect us and drive away sorrow, O how cheering will the sight of God be to the saints in heaven! then indeed it may be said, your heart shall rejoice, John xvi. 22. And there are two things which will make the saints' vision of God in heaven joyful.



1. Through Jesus Christ the dread and terror of the divine essence shall be taken away. Majesty shall appear in God to preserve reverence, but withal majesty clothed with beauty, and tempered with sweetness to excite joy in the saints. We shall see God as a friend, not as guilty Adam did, who 'was afraid, and hid himself;' but as Queen Esther looked upon king Ahasuerus, holding forth the golden sceptre; surely this sight of God will not be formidable, but comfortable.

2. The saints shall not only have vision, but fruition; they shall so see God, as to enjoy him. Aquinas and Scotus dispute the case, whether the very formality and essence of blessedness be an act of the understanding or the will. Aquinas saith happiness consists in the intellectual part, the bare seeing of God. Scotus saith, happiness is an act of the will, the enjoying of God; but certainly true blessedness comprehends both; it lies partly in the understanding, by seeing the glory of God richly displayed; and partly in the will, by a sweet delicious taste of it, and acquiescence of the soul in it; we shall so see God as to love him, and so love him as to be filled with him; the seeing of God implies fruition, Matt. xxv. 21. 'Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord;' not only behold it, but enter into it. Psal. xxxvi. 9. 'In thy light we shall see light,' there is vision. Psal. xvi. ult. 'At thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore,' There is fruition. So great is the joy which flows from the sight of God, as will make the saints break forth into triumphant praises and hallelujahs.

5. This sight of God will be a satisfying sight; cast three worlds into the heart, and they will not fill it; but the sight of God satisfies, Psal. xvii. 15. 'I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness.' Solomon saith, 'the eye is not satisfied with seeing,' Eccl. i. 8. But there the eye will be satisfied with

seeing: God and nothing but God can satisfy. The saints shall have their heads so full of knowledge, and their hearts so full of joy, that they shall find no want.

6. It will be an unweariable sight; let a man see the rarest sight that is, he will soon be cloyed; when he comes into a garden and sees delicious walks, fair arbours, pleasant flowers, within a little while he grows weary; but it is not so in heaven, there is no surfeit; we shall never be weary of seeing God; for the divine essence being infinite, there shall be every moment new and fresh delights springing forth from God into the glorified soul; the soul shall not so desire God, but it shall still be full; nor shall it be so full, but it shall still desire; so sweet will God be, that the more the saints behold God, the more they will be ravished with desire and delight.

7. It will be a beneficial sight, it will tend to the bettering and advantaging of the soul; some colours, while they delight the eyes, they hurt them; but this intuition and vision of God shall better the soul, and tend to its infinite happiness. Eve's looking upon the tree of knowledge did prejudice her sight; she afterwards grew blind upon it; but the saints can receive no detriment from the inspection of glory, this sight will be beatifical: the soul will never be in its perfection till it comes to see God, this will be the crowning blessing.

8. This sight of God shall be perpetuated; here we see objects a while, and then our eyes grow dim, and we need spectacles; but the saints shall always behold God; as there shall be no cloud upon God's face, so the saints shall have no mote in their eye; their sight shall never grow dim, but they shall be to all eternity looking on God, that beautiful and beatifical object. O what a soul-ravishing sight will this be! God must make us able to bear it; we can no

more endure a sight of glory, than a sight of wrath; but the saints after this life shall have their capacities enlarged, and they shall be qualified, and made fit to receive the penetrating beams of glory.

9. It will be a speedy sight. There are some who deny that the soul is immediately after death admitted to the sight of God; but I shall make good the assertion, that the saints shall have an immediate transition and passage from death to glory; as soon as death hath closed their eyes they shall see God; if the soul be not presently after death translated to the beatifical vision, then what becomes of the soul in that juncture of time till the resurrection?

1. Doth the soul go into torment? that cannot be; for the soul of a believer is a member of Christ's body mystical; and if this soul should go to hell, then something of Christ should go to hell; a member of Christ might be for a time damned; but that is impossible.

2. Doth the soul sleep in the body as some drowsily imagine? How then shall we make good sense of that scripture? 2 Cor. v. 8. 'We are willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.' If the soul at death be absent from the body, then it cannot sleep in the body.

3. Doth the soul die? so the Lucianists held that the soul was mortal, and did die with the body; but, as Scaliger observes, it is impossible that the soul, being of a spiritual, uncompounded nature, should be subject to corruptibility, Luke xii. 4. Such as say the soul dies, I would demand of them wherein the soul of a man then differs at death from the soul of a brute? By all which it appears, that the soul of a believer after death goes immediately to God, Luke xxiii. 43. 'This day shalt thou be with me in paradise.' That word, with me, shews clearly that the thief on the cross was translated to heaven, for there Christ was, Eph. iv. 10. And the

other word, this day, shews that the thief on the cross had an immediate passage from the cross to paradise; so that the souls of believers have a speedy vision of God after death; it is but winking, and they shall see God.

SECT. 2.

*The Sinner's misery that he shall not see God.*

*Use 1.* See the misery of an impure sinner, he shall not be admitted to the sight of God; 'the pure in heart only shall see God.' Such as live in sin, whose souls are dyed black with the filth of hell, they shall never come where God is; they shall have an affrighting vision of God, but not a beatifical vision; they shall see the flaming sword, and the burning lake, but not the mercy-seat; God in scripture is sometimes called a consuming fire, sometimes the Father of lights; the wicked shall feel the fire, but not see the light: impure souls shall be covered with shame and darkness, as with a mantle; and shall never see the king's face; they who would not see God in his ordinances, shall not see him in his glory.

SECT. 3.

*That we should labour to be rightly qualified for this Vision.*

*Use 2.* Is there such a blessed privilege after this life? then let me persuade all who hear me this day,  
**1.** To get into Christ; we cannot come to God but by Christ; we cannot see God but through Christ. Moses when he was in the rock did see God, Exod. xxxiii. 32. In this blessed rock Christ we shall see God. **2.** Be purified persons; it is only the pure in

heart who shall see God; it is only a clear eye can behold a bright transparent object; those only who have their hearts cleansed from sin, can have this blessed sight of God; sin is such a cloud, as if it be not removed, will for ever hinder us from seeing the Sun of Righteousness. Christian, hast thou upon thy heart holiness to the Lord? then thou shalt see God; there are many, saith saint Austin, could be content to go to heaven, but they are loath to take the way that leads thither; they would have the glorious vision; but neglect the gracious union.

There are several sorts of eyes which shall never see God; the ignorant eye, the unchaste eye, the scornful eye, the malicious eye, the covetous eye; if you would see God when you die, you must be purified persons while you live, 1 John iii. 2, 3. 'We shall see him as he is; and every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself.'

#### SECT. 4.

#### *A Cordial for the Pure in Heart.*

*Use 3.* Let me turn myself to the pure in heart.

1. Stand amazed at this privilege, that you who are worms crept out of the dust, should be admitted to the blessed sight of God to all eternity; it was Moses' prayer, 'I beseech thee shew me thy glory,' Exod. xxxiii. 18. The saints shall behold God's glory; the pure in heart shall have the same blessedness that God himself hath; for what is the blessedness of God, but the contemplating his own infinite beauty?

2. Begin your sight of God here: let the eye of your faith be still upon God. Moses by faith 'saw him who is invisible, Heb. xi. 27. Oft look upon him with believing eyes, whom you hope to see with glorified eyes, Psal. xxv. 'Mine eyes are ever

towards the Lord; while others are looking towards the earth, as if they would fetch all their comforts thence, let us look up to heaven, there is the best prospect; the sight of God by faith would let in much joy to the soul, 1 Pet. i. 8. 'Though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable.'

3. Let this be a cordial-water to revive the pure in heart; be comforted with this, you shall shortly see God. The godly have many sights here that they would not see; they see a body of death, they see the sword unsheathed, they see rebellion wearing the mask of religion; they see the white devil, these sights occasion sorrow; but there is a blessed sight a coming, 'they shall see God;' and in him are all sparkling beauties, and ravishing joys to be found.

4. Be not discouraged at sufferings; all the hurt affliction and death can do, is to give you a sight of God: as one said to his fellow martyr, one half hour in glory will make us forget our pain; the sun arising, all the dark shadows of the night fly away: the thoughts of this beatifical vision should carry a Christian full sail with joy through the waters of affliction: this made Job so willing to embrace death, Job xix. 25, 26. 'I know that my Redeemer liveth, and though worms devour this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.'



MATT. v. 9. *Blessed are the Peace makers, &c.*

## CHAP. XVIII.

### *Concerning Peaceableness.*

THIS is the seventh step of the golden ladder which leads to blessedness. The name of peace is sweet, and the work of peace is a blessed work.

'Blessed are the peace-makers.' Observe the connexion, the scripture links these two together, pureness of heart, and peaceableness of spirit. James iii. 17. 'The wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable.' Heb. xii. 14. 'Follow peace and holiness; and here Christ joins them together, pure in heart, and peace-makers; as if there could be no purity where there is not a study of peace; that religion is suspicious, which is full of faction and discord.

In the words there are three parts.

1. A duty implied, viz. peaceable-mindedness.
2. A duty expressed; to be peace-makers.
3. A title of honour bestowed; 'they shall be called the children of God.'

1. The duty implied, peaceable-mindedness; for before men can make peace among others, they must be of peaceable spirits themselves; before they can be promoters of peace, they must be lovers of peace.

*Doct.* 1. That Christians must be peaceable-minded; this peaceableness of spirit is the beauty of a saint, it is a jewel of great price, 1 Pet. iii. 4. 'The ornament of a quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.' The saints are Christ's sheep, John x. 27. the sheep is a peaceable creature; they are Christ's doves, Cant. ii. 14. therefore they must be without gall; it becomes not Christians to be Ishmaels, but Solomons: though they must be lions for courage, yet lambs for peaceableness; God was not in the earthquake, nor in the fire, but 'in the still small voice,' 1 Kings xix. 12. God is not in the rough, fiery spirit, but in the peaceable spirit. There is a fourfold peace that we must study and cherish.

1. An œconomical peace, peace in families; it is called 'the bond of peace,' Eph. iv. 3. Without this all drops in pieces; peace is a girdle that ties

together members in a family; it is a golden clasp that knits them together that they do not fall in pieces; we should endeavour that our houses should be houses of peace: it is not fairness of rooms makes an house pleasant, but peaceableness of dispositions; there can be no comfortableness in our dwellings, till peace be entertained as an inmate into our houses.

2. There is a parochial peace; when there is a sweet harmony, a tuning and chiming together of affections in a parish; when all draw one way, and as the apostle saith, are 'perfectly joined in the same mind.' 1 Cor. i. 10. One jarring string brings all the music out of tune; one bad member in a parish endangers the whole: 1 Thess. v. 13. 'Be at peace among yourselves.' It is little comfort to have our houses joined together, if our hearts be asunder; a geometrical union will do little good without a moral.

3. There is a political peace; peace in city and country, this is the fairest flower of a prince's crown; peace is the best blessing of a nation. It is well with bees when there is a noise; but it is best with Christians, when (as in the building of the temple) there is no noise of hammer heard. Peace brings plenty along with it; how many miles would some go on pilgrimage to purchase this peace! therefore the Greeks made peace to be the nurse of Pluto the god of wealth. Political plants thrive best in the sunshine of peace, Psal. cxlvii. 14. 'He maketh peace in thy borders, and filleth thee with the finest of the wheat.' The ancients made the harp the emblem of peace: how sweet would the sounding of this harp be after the roaring of the cannon! All should study to promote this political peace; the godly man, when he dies, 'enters into peace,' Isa. lvii. 2. But while he lives, peace must enter into him.



4. There is an ecclesiastical peace, a church peace: when there is unity and verity in the church of God; never doth religion flourish more, than when her children spread themselves as olive-plants round about her table: unity in faith and discipline is a mercy we cannot prize enough; this is that which God hath promised, Jer. xxxii. 39. And which we should pursue, Zech. viii. 19. Saint Ambrose saith of Theodosius the emperor, when he lay sick, he took more care for the church's peace than for his own recovery.

The reasons why we should be peaceable-minded are two, 1. We are called to peace, 1 Cor. vii. 15. God never called any man to division; that is a reason why we should not be given to strife, because we have no call for it; but God hath called us to peace. 2. It is the nature of grace to change the heart and make it peaceable: by nature we are of a fierce cruel disposition: when God cursed the ground for man's sake, the curse was, that it should bring forth thorns and thistles, Gen. iii. 18. The heart of man naturally lies under this curse, it brings forth nothing but the thistles of strife and contention; but when grace comes into the heart, it makes it peaceable, it infuseth a sweet loving disposition, it smooths and polisheth the most knotty piece, it files off the ruggedness in mens' spirits; grace turns the vulture into a dove; the brier into a myrtle-tree, Isa. lv. 13. the lion-like fierceness into a lamb-like gentleness, Isa. xi. 7, 8. 'The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid,' &c. It is spoken of the power which the gospel shall have upon men's hearts, it shall make such a metamorphosis, that those who before were full of rage and antipathy, shall now be made peaceable and gentle; 'The leopard shall lie down with the kid'.

SECT. 1.

*Use 1. Inform.* It shews us the character of a true saint; he is given to peace; he is the keeper of the peace; he is a son of peace.

*Caution.* Not but that a man may be of a peaceable spirit, yet seek to recover that which is his due; if peace hath been otherwise sought, and cannot be attained, a man may go to law, and yet be a peaceable man. It is with going to law, as it is with going to war, when the rights of a nation are invaded; as 2 Chron. xx. 2, 3. and peace can be purchased by no other means than war, here it is lawful to beat the plough-share into a sword; so when there is no other way of recovering one's right, but by going to law, a man may commence a suit in law, yet be of a peaceable spirit. Going to law (in this case) is not so much striving with another, as contending for a man's own; it is not to do another wrong, but to do himself right; it is a desire rather of equity than victory: I say as the apostle, 1 Tim. i. 8. 'The law is good if a man use it lawfully.'

*Quest.* Is all peace to be sought? how far is peace lawful?

*Ans.* Peace with men must have this double limitation.

1. The peace a godly man seeks, is not to have a league of amity with sinners; though we are to be at peace with their persons, yet we are to have war with their sins; we are to have peace with their persons as they are made in God's image; but to have war with their sins as they have made themselves in the devil's image: David was for peace, Psal. cxx. 7. but he would not sit upon the ale-bench with sinners, Psal. xxvi. 4, 5. Grace teacheth good nature; we are to be civil to the worst,

but not twist into a cord of friendship; that were to be brethren in iniquity, Eph. v. 11. 'Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness.' Jehoshaphat, though a good man, was blamed for this, 2 Chron. xix. 2. 'Shouldst thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord?' The fault was not that he entertained civil peace with Ahab; but that he had a league of friendship, and was assistant to Ahab, when he went contrary to God; 'Therefore there was wrath upon Jehoshaphat from the Lord,' ver. 2. We must not so far have peace with others, as to endanger ourselves: if a man hath the plague, we will be helpful to him, and send him our best recipes, but we are careful not to have too much of his company, or suck in his infectious breath: so we may be peaceable towards all, nay helpful; pray for them, counsel them, relieve them; but let us take heed of too much familiarity, lest we suck in their infection: in short, we must so make peace with men, that we do not break our peace with conscience: Heb. xii. 14. 'Follow peace and holiness;' we must not purchase peace with the loss of holiness.

2. We must not so seek peace with others, as to wrong truth, Prov. xxiii. 23. 'Buy the truth, and sell it not.' Peace must not be bought with the sale of truth; truth is the ground of faith, the rule of manners: truth is the most orient gem of the church's crown; truth is a *depositum*, or charge that God hath intrusted us with; we trust God with our souls, he trusts us with his truths; we must not let any of God's truths fall to the ground, the least filings of this gold are precious; we must not so seek the flower of peace, as to lose the pearl of truth.

Some say let us unite, but we ought not to unite with error. 'What communion hath light

with darkness?" 2 Cor. vi. 14. There are many would have peace with the destroying of truth: peace with Arminian, Socinian, Antiscripturist; this is a peace of the devil's making. Cursed be that peace which makes war with the Prince of peace; though we must be peaceable, yet we are bid to 'contend for the faith,' Jude iii. We must not be so in love with the golden crown of peace, as to pluck off the jewels of truth; rather let peace go than truth; the martyrs would rather lose their lives, than let go the truth.

SECT. 2.

*Containing a Reproof of such as are Unpeaceable.*

*Use 2. Rep.* If Christians must be peaceable-minded, what shall we say to those who are given to strife and contention? who, like flax or gun-powder, if they be but touched, are all on fire! how far is this from the spirit of the gospel? it is made the note of the wicked, Isa. lvii. 'they are like the troubled sea;' there is no rest or quietness in their spirits, but they are continually casting forth the foam of passion and fury. We may, with Strigelius, wish even to die, to be freed from the bitter strifes which are among us; there are too many like the salamander, who live in the fire of broils and contentions, James iii. 14, 15. 'If ye have bitter envying and strife, this wisdom descends not from above, but is devilish;' the lustful man is brutish, the wrathful man is devilish. Every one is afraid to dwell in an house which is haunted with evil spirits; yet how little are men afraid of their own hearts, which are haunted with the evil spirit of wrath and implacableness.

And which is much to be laid to heart, the divisions of God's people; God's own tribes go to

war. In Tertullian's time it was said, See how the Christians love one another; but now it may be said, See how the Christians snarl at one another! Wicked men agree together, when those who pretend to be led by higher principles, are full of animosities and heart-burnings. Was it not sad to see Herod and Pilate uniting, and to see Paul and Barnabas falling out? Acts. xv. 39. When the disciples called for fire from heaven, 'Ye know not, saith Christ, what manner of spirit ye are of,' Luke ix. 56. As if the Lord had said, this fire you call for is not zeal, but is the wild-fire of your own passions; this spirit of yours doth not suit with the Master you serve, the Prince of peace, nor the work I am sending you about, which is an embassy of peace; it is Satan who kindles the fire of contention in mens' hearts, and then stands and warms himself at the fire. When boisterous winds are up, we use to talk of conjurors: sure I am, when men's spirits begin to bluster and storm, the devil hath conjured up these winds. Discords and animosities among Christians, bring their godliness much into question; for 'the wisdom which is from above is peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated,' Jam. iii. 17.

### SECT. 3.

*Containing an Exhortation to peaceable-mindedness.*

*Use 3. Exhort.* Be of a peaceable disposition: Rom. xii. 18. 'If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.' The curtains of the tabernacle were to be looped together, Exod. xxvi. 3, 4. so should the hearts of Christians be looped together in peace and unity. That I may persuade to peaceable-mindedness, let me speak both to reason and conscience.

1. A peaceable spirit seems to be agreeable to the

natural frame and constitution; man, by nature seems to be a peaceable creature, fitter to handle the plough than the sword; other creatures are naturally armed with some kind of weapon wherewith they are able to revenge themselves: the lion hath his paw, the boar his tusk, the bee his sting; only man hath none of these weapons, he comes naked and unarmed into the world, as if God would have him a peaceable creature. Man hath his reason given him that he should live amicably and peaceably.

2. A peaceable spirit is honourable, Prov. xx.

3. 'It is an honour for a man to cease from strife.' We think it a brave thing to give way to strife, and let loose the reins of our passions; oh no, it is 'an honour to cease from strife:' noble spirits are such lovers of peace, that they need not be bound to the peace; it is the bramble that rends and tears whatever is near it; the cedar and fig-tree, those more noble plants, grow pleasantly and peaceably: peaceableness is the ensign and ornament of a noble mind.

3. To be of a peaceable spirit is highly prudential, Jam. iii. 17. 'The wisdom from above is peaceable.' A wise man will not meddle with strife; It is like putting one's finger into a hornet's nest; or, to use Solomon's simile, Prov. xvii. 14. 'The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water.' To set out the folly of strife, it is as letting out of water in two respects.

1. When water begins to be let out, there is no end of it; so there is no end of strife when once begun.

2. The letting out of water is dangerous: if a man should break down a bank, and let in an arm of the sea, the water might overflow his fields, and drown him in the flood: so is he that intermeddles with strife; he may mischief himself, and open such a sluice as may ingulph and swallow him up.

True wisdom espouseth peace; a prudent man will keep off from the briars as much as he can.

4. To be of a peaceable spirit, brings peace along with it; a contentious person vexeth himself, and eclipseth his own comfort; he is like the bird that beats itself against the cage, 'he troubleth his own flesh,' Prov. xi. 17. He is just like one that pares off the sweet of the apple, and eats nothing but the core: so a quarrelsome man pares off all the comfort of his life, and feeds only upon the bitter core of disquiet, he is a self-tormentor; the wicked are compared to a troubled sea, Isa. lvii. 20. and it follows, 'there is no peace to the wicked,' ver. 21. The Septuagint renders it, there is no joy to the wicked; froward spirits do not enjoy what they possess; but peaceableness of spirit brings the sweet music of peace along with it, it makes a calm and harmony in the soul; therefore the Psalmist saith, it is not only good, but pleasant to live together in unity, Psal. cxxxiii. 1.

5. A peaceable disposition is a godlike disposition.

1. God the Father is called 'the God of peace,' Heb. xiii. 20. Mercy and peace are about his throne, he signs the articles of peace, and sends the ambassadors of peace to publish them, 2 Cor. v. 20.

2. God the Son is called 'the Prince of Peace,' Is. ix. 6. His name is Emmanuel, 'God with us,' a name of peace; his office is to be a Mediator of peace, 1 Tim. ii. 5. He came into the world with a song of peace; the angels did sing it, Luke ii. 14. 'Peace on earth;' he went out of the world with a legacy of peace: John xiv. 27. 'Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you.'

3. God the Holy Ghost is a Spirit of peace, he is the Comforter; he seals up peace, 2 Cor. i. 22. This blessed dove brings the olive-branch of peace

in his mouth; now a peaceable disposition evidenceth something of God in a man, therefore God loves to dwell there, Psal. lxxvi. 2. 'In Salem is God's tabernacle:' Salem signifies peace; God dwells in a peaceable spirit.

6. Christ's earnest prayer was for peace; he prayed that his people 'might be one,' John xvii. 11, 21, 23. that they might be of one mind and heart: and observe the argument Christ useth in prayer, (it is good to use arguments in prayer; they are as the feathers to the arrow, which make it fly swifter and pierce deeper; affections in prayer are as the fire in the gun; arguments in prayer are as the bullet) the argument Christ urgeth to his Father, is, ver. 22. 'That they may be one, even as we are one.' There was never any discord between God the Father and Christ; though God parted with Christ out of his bosom, yet not out of his heart. There was ever dearness and oneness between them; now Christ prays, that as he and his Father were one, so his people might be all one in peace and concord. Did Christ pray so earnestly for peace, and shall not we endeavour what in us lies to fulfil Christ's prayer? how do we think Christ will hear our prayer, if we cross his?

7. Christ not only prayed for peace, but bled for it. Col. i. 20. 'Having made peace through the blood of his cross:' he died not only to make peace between God and man, but between man and man. Christ suffered on the cross, that he might cement Christians together with his blood; as he prayed for peace, so he paid for peace; Christ was himself bound to bring us into the bond of peace.

8. Strife and contention hinder the growth of grace: can good seed grow in a ground where there is nothing but thorns and briars to be seen? Matt. xiii. 'The thorns choked the seed.' When the heart is as it were stuck with thorns, and is ever



tearing and rending, can the seed of grace ever grow there? Historians report of the isle of Patmos, that the natural soil of it is such, that nothing will grow upon that earth. A froward heart is like the isle of Patmos, nothing of grace will grow there, till God changeth the soil, and maketh it peaceable. How can faith grow in an unpeaceable heart? for 'faith works by love.' Impossible it is that he should bring forth the sweet fruits of the Spirit, who is 'in the gall of bitterness;' if a man hath received poison into his body, the most excellent food will not nourish, till he takes some antidote to expel that poison. Many come to the ordinances with seeming zeal, but being poisoned with wrath and animosity they receive no spiritual nourishment. Christ's body mystical 'edifieth itself in love,' Eph. iv. 16. There may be praying and hearing, but no spiritual concoction, no edifying of the body of Christ without love and peace.

9. Peaceableness among Christians is a powerful loadstone to draw the world to receive Christ; not only gifts and miracles, and preaching, may persuade men to embrace the truth of the gospel, but peace and unity among the professors of it: when, as there is one God and one faith, so there is one heart among Christians; this is as cummin seed, which makes the doves flock to the window. The temple was adorned with goodly stones, Luke xxi. 5. This makes Christ's spiritual temple look beautiful, and the stones of it appear goodly, when they are cemented together in peace and unity.

10. Unpeaceableness of spirit is to make Christians turn heathens; it is the sin of the heathens, implacable, Rom. i. 31. They cannot be pacified, their hearts are like adamant, no oil can supple them, no fire can melt them; it is a heathenish thing to be so fierce and violent, as if with Romulus, men had sucked the milk of wolves.

11. To add yet more weight to the exhortation, it is the mind of Christ that we should live in peace, Mark ix. 50. 'have peace one with another.' Shall we not be at peace for Christ's sake? if we ought to lay down our life for Christ's sake, shall we not lay down our strife for his sake?

To conclude, if we will neither be under counsels nor commands, but still feed the peccant humour, nourishing in ourselves a spirit of dissension and unpeaceableness, Jesus Christ will never come near us. The people of God are said to be his house, Heb. iii. 6. 'Whose house are we,' &c. When the hearts of Christians are a spiritual house, adorned with the furniture of peace, then they are fit for the Prince of peace to inhabit; but when this pleasant furniture is wanting, and instead of it nothing but strife and debate, Christ will not own it for his house, nor will he grace it with his presence; who will dwell in an house which is smoky, and all on fire?

#### SECT. 4.

##### *Shewing some Helps to Peaceableness.*

*Quest.* How shall we attain to peaceableness?

1. Take heed of those things which will hinder it. There are several impediments of peace which we must be aware of, and they are either outward or inward.

1. Outward; as whisperers, Rom. i. 29. There are some who will be buzzing things in our ears, purposely to exasperate and provoke; among these we may rank talebearers, Lev. xix. 16. The talebearer carries reports up and down, the devil sends his letters by this post; the talebearer is an incendiary, he blows the coals of contention. Do you hear, saith he, what such an one saith of you? will

you put up with such a wrong? will you suffer yourself to be so abused? thus doth he, by throwing in his fire-balls, foment differences, and set men together by the ears; we are commanded indeed 'to provoke one another to love,' Heb. x. 24. but nowhere to provoke to anger: we should stop our ears to such persons as are known to come on the devil's errand.

2. Take heed of inward lets to peace.

As 1. Self-love, 2 Tim. iii. 2. 'Men shall be lovers of themselves:' and it follows, they shall be fierce, ver. 3. The setting up of this idol of self hath caused so many lawsuits, plunders, massacres in the world, 'All seek their own,' Phil. ii. 21. Nay, it would be well if they would seek but their own. Self-love angles away the estates of others either by force or fraud. Self-love sets up monopolies and enclosures; it is a bird of prey which lives upon rapine. Self-love cuts asunder the bond of peace: lay aside self: the heathens could say, We are not born for ourselves.

2. Pride. Prov. xxviii. 25, 'He that is of a proud heart, stirreth up strife.' Pride and contention, like Hippocrates' twins, are both born at once. A proud man thinks himself better than others, and will contend for superiority, John iii. 9. 'Diotrephes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence:' a proud man would have all strike sail to him, Because Mordecai would not give Haman the cap and knee, he gets a bloody warrant signed for the death of all the Jews, Esther iii. 9. What made all the strife between Pompey and Cæsar but pride; their spirits were too high to yield one to another. When this wind of pride gets into a man's heart, it causeth sad earthquakes of division. The poets feign, that when Pandora's box was broke open, it filled the world with diseases. When Adam's pride had broken the box of original righteousness, it bath

ever since filled the world with debates and dissensions. Let us shake off this viper of pride; humility solders Christians together in peace.

3. Envy; envy stirreth up strife; the apostle hath linked them together: 1 Tim. vi. 4. 'Envy, strife.' Envy cannot endure a superior; this made the plebeian faction so strong among the Romans, they envied their superiors; an envious man seeing another to have a fuller crop, a better trade, is ready to pick a quarrel with him.' Prov. xxvii. 4. 'Who can stand before envy?' Envy is a vermin that lives on blood; take heed of it; peace will not dwell with this inmate.

4. Credulity. Prov. xxvii. 15. 'The simple believeth every word.' A credulous man is akin to a fool, he believes all that is told him, and this often doth create differences. As it is a sin to be a tale-bearer, so it is a folly to be a tale-believer. A wise man will not take a report at the first bound, but will sift and examine it before he gives credit to it.

2. Let us labour for those things which will maintain and cherish peace.

As, 1. Faith: Faith and peace keep house together; faith believes the word of God; the word saith, 'Live in peace,' 2 Cor. xiii. 11. And as soon as faith sees the King of heaven's warrant, it obeys; faith persuades the soul that God is at peace; and it is impossible to believe this, and live in variance; nourish faith; faith knits us to God in love, and to our brethren in peace.

2. Christian communion: there should not be too much strangeness among Christians; the primitive saints had their love-feasts. The apostle exhorting to peace brings this as an expedient, 'Be ye kind one to another,' Eph. iv. 32.

3. Look not upon the failings of others, but their graces; there is no perfection here. We read of the spots of God's children, Deut. xxxii. 5. The

most golden Christians are some grains too light: Oh let us not so quarrel with the infirmities of others, as to pass by their virtues. If in some things they fail, in other things they excel. It is the manner of the world to look more upon the sun in an eclipse, than when it shines in its full lustre.

4. Pray to God that he will send down the Spirit of peace into our hearts; we should not, as vultures, prey one upon another; but pray one for another. Pray that God will quench the fire of contention, and kindle the fire of compassion in our hearts one to another: So much for the first thing in the text implied, that Christians should be peaceable-minded. I proceed to the second thing expressed, that they should be peace-makers.

#### SECT. 5.

#### *Pressing Christians to be peace-makers.*

*Doct. 2.* That all good Christians ought to be peace-makers; they should not only be peaceable themselves, but make others to be at peace; as in the body, when a joint is out, we set it again; so it should be in the body politic: when a garment is rent, we sew it together again; when others are rent asunder in their affections, we should, with a spirit of meekness, sew them together again: had we this excellent skill, we might glue and unite dissenting spirits. I confess it is oft a thankless office to go about to reconcile differences, Acts. vii. 27. Handle a briar ever so gently, it will go near to scratch; he that goes to interpose between two fencers, many times receives the blow; but this duty, though it may want success as from men, yet it shall not want a blessing from God: 'Blessed are the peace-makers.' O how happy were Britain if it had more peace-makers. Abraham was a peace-maker,

Gen. xiii. 8. Moses was a peace-maker, Exod. ii. 13. and that ever to be honoured emperor Constantine, when he called the bishops together at that first council of Nice to end church-controversies, they having instead of that prepared bitter invectives, and accusations one against another; Constantine took their papers and rent them, gravely exhorting them to peace and unanimity.

*Use 1. Reproof.* It sharply reproves them that are so far from being peace-makers, that they are peace-breakers. If blessed are the peace-makers, then cursed are the peace-breakers: if peace-makers are the children of God, then peace-breakers are the children of the devil. Heretics destroy the truth of the church by error; and schismatics destroy the peace of it by division; the apostle sets a brand upon such, Rom. xvi. 17. 'Mark those which cause divisions, and avoid them:' have no more to do with them, than with witches or murderers; the devil was the first peace-breaker, he divided man from God; he, like Phaeton, set all on fire: there are too many make-baits in Britain, whose sweetest music is in discord; who never unite but to divide; as it was said of one of the Arian-emperors, he procured unity to prevent peace: how many in our days may be compared to Samson's fox-tails, which were tied together only to set the Philistines' corn on fire? Judges xv. 4, 5. Sectaries unite to set the church's peace on fire; these are the persons God's soul hates, Prov. vi. 19. 'Sowers of discord among brethren;' these are the children of a curse, Deut. xxvii. 24. 'Cursed be he that smiteth his neighbour secretly.' That is, who backbiteth, and so sets one friend against another; if there be a devil in man's shape it is the incendiary.

*Use 2.* It exhorts to two things.

*Exhort. Branch 1.* Let us take up a bitter lamentation for the divisions of England; the wild beast

hath broken down the hedge of our peace; we are like an house falling to ruin, if the Lord doth not mercifully under-prop and shore us up. None of the sons of England comfort her, but rather rake in her bowels: will not an ingenuous child grieve to see his mother rent and torn in pieces? It is reported of Cato, that from the time the civil war began in Rome between Cæsar and Pompey, he was never seen to laugh, or shave his beard, or cut his hair. That our hearts may be sadly affected with these our church and state divisions, let us consider the mischief of divisions.

1. They are a prognostick of much evil to a nation; here that rule in philosophy holds true, *omne divisibile est corruptibile*. When the veil of the temple did rend in pieces, it was a sad omen and forerunner of the destruction of the temple; the rending the veil of the church's peace, betokens the ruin of it. Josephus observes that the city of Jerusalem, when it was besieged by Titus Vespasian, had three great factions in it, which destroyed more than the enemy, and was the occasion of the taking it: How fatal intestine divisions have been to this land! Camden and other learned writers relate, our discerptions and mutinies have been the scaling ladder by which the Romans and the Normans have formerly gotten into the nation. How is the bond of peace broken! We have so many schisms in the body, and are run into so many particular churches, that God may justly unchurch us, as he did Asia.

2. It may afflict us to see the garment of the church's peace rent, because divisions bring an opprobrium and scandal upon religion; these make the ways of God evil spoken of, as if religion were the fomer of strife and sedition. Julian, in his invectives against the Christians, said they lived together as tygers, rending and devouring one another; and shall we make good Julian's words? It

is unseemly to see Christ's doves fighting; to see his lily become a bramble. Alexander Severus seeing two Christians contending, commanded them that they should not take the name of Christians any longer upon them, for, saith he, you dishonour your master Christ. Let men either lay down their contentions, or lay off the coat of their profession.

3. Divisions obstruct the progress of piety; the gospel seldom thrives where the apple of strife grows; the building of God's spiritual temple is hindered by the confusion of tongues. Division eats as a worm, and destroys 'the peaceable fruits of righteousness.' In the Church of Corinth, when they began to divide into parties, one was for Paul, and another for Apollos, there were but few for Christ; confident I am, England's divisions have made many turn atheists.

2. Let us labour to heal differences, and be repairers of breaches; 'Blessed are the peace-makers.'

1. Jesus Christ was a great peace-maker, he took a long journey from heaven to earth to make peace.

2. Peace and unity is a great means for the corroborating and strengthening the church of God: the saints are compared to living stones, built up for a spiritual house, 1 Pet. ii. 5. You know the stones in an arch or fabric do help to preserve and bear up one another; if the stones be loosened, and drop out, all the fabric falls in pieces: when the Christians in the primitive church were of one heart, Acts. iv. 32. what a supporting was this? how did they counsel, comfort, build up one another in their holy faith? we see while the members of the body are united, so long they do administer help and nourishment one to another; but if they be divided and broken off, they are no way useful, but the body languisheth; therefore let us endeavour to be peace-makers; the church's unity tends much to her stability.



3. Peace makes the church of God on earth in some measure like the church which is in heaven; the cherubims, representing the angels, are set out with their faces 'looking one upon another,' to shew their peace and unity; there are no jarrings or discords among the heavenly spirits; one angel is not of an opinion differing from another; though they have different orders, they are not of different spirits; they are seraphims, therefore burn, but not in heat of contention, but love: the angels serve God, not only with pure hearts, but united hearts; by an harmonious peace we might resemble the church triumphant.

4. He that sows peace, shall reap peace, Prov. xii. 20. 'To the counsellors of peace is joy.' The peace-maker shall have peace with God; peace in his own bosom; and that is the sweetest music which is made in a man's own breast; he shall have peace with others; the hearts of all shall be united to him, all shall honour him; he shall be called, 'The repairer of the breach,' Isa. lviii. 12.

To conclude, the peace-maker shall die in peace, he shall carry a good conscience with him, and leave a good name behind him. So I have done with the first part of the text, 'Blessed are the peace-makers.' I proceed to the next.

## CHAP. XIX.

MATT. v. 9. *They shall be called the Children of God.*

**I**N which words the glorious privilege of the saints is set down: those who have made their peace with God, and labour to make peace among brethren, this is the great honour conferred upon them, 'They shall be called the children of God.'

*They shall be [called;]* that is, they shall be so reputed and esteemed of God; God never miscalls

any thing; he doth not call them children who are no children, Luke i. 76. 'Thou shalt be called the Prophet of the Highest; that is, thou shalt be so; 'they shall be called the children of God; that is, they shall be accounted and admitted for children.

*Doct.* The proposition resulting is this, That peace-makers are the children of the most High. God is said in Scripture to have many children.

1. By Eternal generation; so only Christ is the natural Son of his Father, Psal. ii. 7. 'Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee.'

2. By Creation; so the angels are the sons of God, Job i. 6. and Job xxxviii. 7. 'When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.'

3. By Participation of dignity; so kings and rulers are said to be children of the High God, Psal. lxxxii. 6. 'I have said ye are gods, and all of you are children of the Most High.'

4. By Visible Profession; so God hath many children. Hypocrites forge a title of sonship, Gen. vi. 2. 'The sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair.'

5. By Real Sanctification; so all the faithful are peculiarly and eminently the children of God.

That I may illustrate and amplify this, and that believers may suck much sweetness out of this gospel-flower, I shall discuss and demonstrate these seven particulars.

1. That naturally we are not the children of God.

2. What it is to be the children of God.

3. How we come to be made children.

4. The signs of God's children.

5. The love of God in making us children.

6. The honour of God's children.

7. The privileges of God's children.

## SECT. 1.

*Shewing that by Nature we are not God's Children.*

1. That naturally we are not the children of God: we are not born God's children, but made so. By nature we are strangers to God; swine, not sons, 2 Pet. ii. ult. Will a man settle his estate upon his swine? he will give them his acorns, not his jewels: by nature we have the devil for our father, John viii. 44. 'Ye are of your father the devil.' A wicked man may search the records of hell for his pedigree.

## SECT. 3.

*Shewing what it is to be Children,*

2. What it is to be the children of God, This childship consists in two things.

1. Adoption. 2. Infusion of grace.

1. Childship consists in adoption, Gal. iv. 5, 'That we might receive the adoption of sons.'

*Quest.* Wherein doth the true nature of adoption consist?

*Ans.* In three things.

1. A transition or translation from one family to another. He that is adopted is taken out of the old family of the devil and hell, Eph. ii. 2, 3. to which he was heir apparent, and is made of the family of heaven, of a noble family, Eph. ii. 19. God is his Father, Christ is his elder-brother, the saints co-heirs, the angels fellow servants in that family.

2. Adoption consists in an immunity and disobligement from all the laws of the former family, Ps. xlv. 10. 'Forget also thy father's house.' He who is spiritually adopted, hath now no more to do with

sin, 'Ephraim shall say, What have I to do any more with idols?' Hos. xiv. 8. A child of God hath indeed to do with sin as with an enemy to which he gives battle; but not as with a lord, to which he yields obedience. He is free from sin, Rom. vi. 8. I do not say he is free from duty: was it ever heard that a child should be freed from duty to his parents? this is such a freedom as rebels take.

3. Adoption consists in a legal investiture into the rights and royalties of the family into which the person is to be adopted; these are chiefly two.

1. The first royalty is a new name. He who is divinely adopted, assumes a new name; before a slave, now a son; of a sinner, a saint; this is a name of honour, better than any title of prince or monarch, Rev. ii. 17. 'To him that overcometh I will give a white stone, and in the stone a new name written.' The white stone signifies remission; the new name signifies adoption; and the new name is put in the white stone, to show that our adoption is grounded upon our justification; and this new name is written, to shew that God hath all the names of his children enrolled in the book of life.

2. The second royalty is, a giving the party adopted an interest in the inheritance. The making one an heir, implies a relation to an inheritance. A man doth not adopt another to a title, but an estate; so God, in adopting us for his children, gives us a glorious inheritance, Col. i. 12. 'the inheritance of the saints in light.'

1. It is pleasant, it is an inheritance in light.

2. It is safe; God keeps the inheritance for his children, 1 Pet. i. 4. and keeps them for the inheritance, 1 Pet. i. 5. so that they cannot be hindered from taking possession.

3. There is no disinheriting, for the saints are co-heirs with Christ, Rom. viii. 17. nay, they are

members of Christ, Col. i. 18. The members cannot be disinherited, but the head must.

4. The heirs never die; eternity is a jewel of their crown, Rev. xxv. 3. 'They shall reign for ever and ever.'

Before I pass to the next, here a question may arise, How God's adopting, and man's adopting differ.

1. Man adopts to supply a defect, because he hath no children of his own; but God doth not adopt upon this account; he had a Son of his own, the Lord Jesus; he was his natural Son, and the Son of his love, testified by a voice from heaven, Matt. iii. ult. 'This is my beloved Son:' never was there any son so like the Father, he was his exact effigies, Heb. i. 3. 'The express image of his person;' he was such a Son as was more worth than all the angels in heaven, Heb. i. 4. 'Being made so much better than the angels;' so that God adopts, not out of necessity, but pity.

2. When a man adopts, he adopts but one heir; but God adopts many, Heb. ii. 10. 'In bringing many sons to glory.' Oh may a poor trembling Christian say, Why should I ever look for this privilege to be a child of God! it is true, if God did do as a man, if he did only adopt one son, then thou mightest despair; but he adopts millions, he brings many sons to glory; indeed this may be the reason why a man adopts but one, because he hath not estate enough for more; if he should adopt many, his land would not hold out; but God hath land enough to give to all his children, John xiv. 2. 'In my Father's house are many mansions.'

3. Man, when he adopts, doth it with ease; it is but sealing a deed, and the thing is done; but when God adopts, it puts him to a far greater expense; it sets his wisdom on work to find out a way to adopt us; it was no easy thing to reconcile hell and

heaven, to make the children of wrath the children of the promise; and when God in his infinite wisdom hath found out a way, it was no easy way, it cost God the death of his natural Son, to make us his adopted sons. When God was about to constitute us sons and heirs, he could not seal the deed but by the blood of his own Son; it did not cost God so much to make us creatures, as to make us sons; to make us creatures cost but the speaking of a word; to make us sons cost the effusion of blood.

4. Man, when he adopts, doth but settle earthly privileges upon his heir; but God settles heavenly privileges, Justification, Glorification. Men do but entail their land upon the persons they adopt; God doth more, he not only entails his land upon his children, but he entails himself upon them, Heb. viii. 10. 'I will be their God;' not only heaven is their portion, but God is their portion.

2. God's filiating or making of children, is by the infusion of grace. When God makes any his children, he stamps his image upon them; this is more than any man living can do; he may adopt another, but he cannot alter his disposition; if he be of a morose rugged nature, he cannot alter it; but God, in making of children, doth prepare and sanctify them for this privilege; he changeth their disposition, he files off the ruggedness of their nature, he makes them not only sons, but saints; they are of another spirit, Numb. xiv. 24. They become meek and humble, they are 'partakers of the divine nature,' 2 Pet. i. 14.

### SECT. 3.

*Shewing how we come to be God's Children.*

3. The third thing is, how we come to be the children of God?

**Ans.** There is a double cause of our filiation or childship:

1. The impulsive cause is God's free grace: we were rebels and traitors, and what could move God to make sinners sons, but free grace? Eph. i. 5. 'Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children, according to the good pleasure of his will.' Free grace gave the casting voice; adoption is a mercy spun out of the bowels of free grace; it were much for God to take a clod of earth, and make it a star; but it is more for God to take a piece of clay and sin, and instate it into the glorious privilege of sonship. How will the saints read over the lectures of free grace in heaven?

2. The organical or instrumental cause of our sonship, is faith; baptism doth not make us children, that is indeed a badge and livery, and gives us right to many external privileges; but the thing which makes God take cognizance of us for children, is faith, Gal. iii. 26. 'Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.' Before faith be wrought, we have nothing to do with God; we are (as the apostle speaks in another sense) 'bastards, and not sons,' Heb. xii. 7. An unbeliever may call God his Judge, but not his Father. Wicked men may draw near to God in ordinances, and hope that God will be their Father; but while they are unbelievers, they are bastards; and God will not father them, but will lay them at the devil's door: 'Ye are the children of God by faith;' faith doth legitimate us, it confers upon us the title of sonship, and gives us right to inherit.

How then should we labour for faith? without faith we are creatures, not children; without faith we are spiritually illegitimate; this word illegitimate, is,

1. A term of infamy; such as are illegitimate, are looked upon with disgrace, we call them base-

born; thou who dost ruffle it in thy silks and velvets, but art in the state of nature, thou art illegitimate; God looks upon thee with an eye of scorn and contempt; thou art a vile person a son of the earth, 'of the seed of the serpent;' the devil can shew as good a coat of arms as thou.

2. This word illegitimate imports infelicity and misery. Persons illegitimate cannot inherit legally; the land goes only to such as are lawful heirs; till we are the children of God, we have no right to heaven; and there is no way to be children but by faith; 'Ye are the children of God by faith.'

Here two things are to be discussed.

1. What is faith. 2. Why faith makes us children.

1. What faith is: If faith doth not instate us in sonship, it concerns us to know what faith is. There is a twofold faith.

1. A more lax, general faith. When we believe the truth of all that is revealed in the holy scriptures, this is not the faith which doth privilege us in sonship; the devils believe all the articles in the creed; it is not the bare knowledge of a medicine, or believing the sovereign virtue of it, will cure one that is ill. This general faith, so much cried up by some, will not save; this a man may have, and yet not love God. He may believe that God will come to judge the quick and the dead, and hate him; as the prisoner believeth the judge's coming to the assizes, and abhors the thoughts of him. Take heed of resting in a general faith; you may have this, and be no better than devils.

2. There is a special faith; when we do not only believe the report we hear of Christ, but rest upon him, embrace him, 'taking hold of the horns of this altar,' resolving there to abide. In the body there are sucking veins; which draw the meat into the stomach, and concoct it there: so faith is the



sucking vein, which draws Christ into the heart, and applies him there. This is the filiating faith; by this we are made the children of God; and wherever this faith is, it is not like physic in a dead man's mouth, but is exceeding operative; it obligeth to duty, it works by love, Gal. v. 6.

*Q.* Why faith makes us children? why not as well other graces, repentance, love, &c.?

*Ans.* 1. Because faith is instituted of God, and honoured to this work of making us children. God's institution gives faith its value and validity; it is the king's stamp makes the coin pass current; if he would put his stamp upon brass or leather, it would go as current as silver. The great God hath authorized, and put the stamp of his institution upon faith, and that makes it pass for current, and gives it a privilege above all the graces to make us children.

2. Faith makes us children, as it is the vital principle, Hab. ii. 4. 'The just shall live by faith.' All God's children are living, none of them are still-born; now 'by faith we live.' As the heart is the fountain of life in the body, so faith is the fountain of life in the soul.

3. Faith makes us children, as it is the uniting grace, it knits us to Christ; the other graces cannot do this; by faith we are one with Christ, and so we are akin to God; being united to the natural Son, we become adopted sons: the kindred comes in by faith, God is the Father of Christ; faith makes us Christ's brethren, and so God comes to be our Father.

#### SECT. 4.

*Setting forth the Signs of God's Children.*

4. The fourth particular to be discussed, is, to shew the signs of God's children; it concerns us to

know whose children we are. Austin saith, all mankind are divided into two ranks; either they are the children of God, or they are the children of the devil.

1. The first sign of our heavenly sonship is, tenderness of heart, 2 Chron. xxxiv. 27. 'Because thy heart was tender.' A child-like heart is a tender heart; he who before had a flinty, hath now a fleshy heart: a tender heart is like melting wax to God, he may set what seal he will upon it; this tenderness of heart shews itself three ways.

1. A tender heart grieves for sin; a child weeps for offending his father. Peter shewed a tender heart, when Christ looked upon him, and he remembered his sin, he wept as a child. Clemens Alexandrinus saith, he never heard a cock crow, but he wept: and some learned writers tell us, that by much weeping there seemed to be, as it were, channels made in his blessed face. The least hair makes the eye weep; the least sin makes the heart smite. David's heart smote him when he cut off the lap of king Saul's garment; what would it have done if he had cut off his head?

2. A tender heart melts under mercy: though, when God thunders by affliction, the rain of tears doth fall from a gracious eye, yet the heart is never so kindly dissolved, as under the sun-beams of God's mercy; see how David's heart was melted with God's kindness, 2 Sam. vii. 18. 'Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?' there was a great thaw upon his heart. So saith a child of God, 'Lord, who am I?' (a piece of dust and sin kneaded together) that the orient beams of free grace should shine upon me! who am I, that thou shouldst pity me when I lay in my blood, and spread the golden wings of mercy over me! the soul is overcome with God's

goodness, the tears drop, the love flames; mercy hath a melting influence upon the soul.

3. A tender heart trembles under God's threatenings, Psal. cxix. 120. 'My flesh trembleth for fear of thee,' 2 Chron. xxxiv. 27. 'Because thy heart was tender, and thou didst humble thyself before God, when thou heardest his words against this place, and didst rend thy clothes,' &c. If the father be angry, the child trembles. When ministers denounce the menaces and threats of God against sin, tender souls sit in a trembling posture; this frame of heart God delights in, Isa. lxvi. 2. 'To this man will I look, even to him that trembleth at my word;' a wicked man, like the leviathan, is made without fear, Job. xli. 33. He never believes the promises, nor dreads the threatenings; let judgment be denounced against sin, he laughs at the shaking of a spear; he thinks either that God is ignorant and doth not see, or impotent and cannot punish; 'The mountains quake' before the Lord, 'the hills melt, the rocks are thrown down by him,' Nah. i. 5. But the hearts of sinners are more obdurate than the rocks; an hardened sinner, like Nebuchadnezzar, hath the heart of a beast given to him, Dan. iv. 16. a child-like heart is a tender heart; the stone is taken away.

2. The second sign of sonship is assimilation, Col. iii. 10. 'Ye have put on the new man which is renewed after the image of him that created him.' The child resembles the father; God's children are like their heavenly father, they bear his very image and impress; wicked men say they are the children of God, but there is too great a dissimilitude and unlikeness; the Jews bragged they were Abraham's children, but Christ disproves them by this argument, John viii. 40. 'Ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth which I have heard of God; this did not Abraham.' You Abraham's

children, and go about to kill me! Abraham would not have murdered an innocent, you are more like satan than Abraham, ver. 44, 'Ye are of your father the devil.' Such as are proud, earthly, malicious, may say, Our father, which art in hell; it is blasphemy to call God our Father, and make the devil our pattern. God's children resemble him in meekness; they are walking pictures; as the seal stamps its print and likeness upon the wax; so doth God stamp the print and effigies of his own beauty upon his children.

3. The third sign of God's children is, they have the Spirit of God. It is called 'the Spirit of adoption,' Rom. viii, 15. 'Ye have received the Spirit of adoption,' &c.

*Quest.* How shall we know that we have received the Spirit of adoption, and so are in the state of adoption.

*Ans.* The Spirit of God hath a threefold work in them who are made children.

1. A regenerating work. 2. A supplicating work. 3. A witnessing work.

1. A regenerating work; Whomsoever the Spirit adopts, it regenerates; God's children are said to be 'born of the Spirit,' John iii. 5. 'Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God;' we must first be born of the Spirit, before we are baptized with this new name of sons and daughters; we are not God's children by creation, but renovation; not by our first birth, but our new birth. This new birth produced by the word as the material cause, and by the Spirit as the efficient cause, is nothing else but a change of nature, Rom. xii. 2. which, though it be not a perfect change, yet is a thorough change, 1 Thess. v. 23. This change of heart is as necessary as salvation.

*Quest.* How shall we know that we have this regenerating work of the Spirit?

*Ans.* Two ways.

By the pangs. By the products.

1. By the pangs; There are spiritual pangs before the new birth; some bruising of the soul; some groanings and cryings out, some strugglings in the heart between flesh and spirit, Acts ii. 37. 'They were pricked at their heart;' The child hath sharp throws before the birth, so it is in the new birth; I grant the new-birth doth *recipere majus et minus*; all have not the same pangs of humiliation; yet all have pangs; all feel the hammer of the law upon their heart, though some are more bruised with this hammer than others; God's Spirit is a Spirit of bondage, before it be a Spirit of adoption, Rom. viii. 15. What then shall we say to those who are as much to seek about the new birth as Nicodemus? John iii. 4. 'How can a man be born when he is old,' &c. The new birth is *ludibrium impiis*, though it be *grande mysterium piis*; some thank God they never had any trouble of spirit, they were always quiet. These bless God for the greatest curse; it is a sign they are not God's children; the child of grace is always born with pangs.

2. The new birth is known by the products, which are three.

1. Sensibility. The infant that is new born, is sensible of the least touch; if the Spirit hath regenerated thee, thou art sensible of the ebullitions and first risings of sin, which before thou didst not perceive. Paul cries out of the law in his members, Rom. vii. 23. The new born saint sees sin in the root.

2. Circumspection. He who is born of the Spirit is careful to preserve grace; he plies the breast of ordinances, 1 Pet. i. 2. He is fearful of that which may endanger his spiritual life, 1 John v. 18. he

lives by faith, yet 'passeth the time of his sojourning in fear,' 1 Pet. i. 17. This is the first work of the Spirit in them who are made children, a regenerating work.

2. The Spirit of God hath a supplicating work in the heart : the Spirit of adoption is a spirit of supplication, Rom. viii. 15. 'Ye have received the Spirit of adoption whereby we cry Abba, Father.' While the child is in the womb it cannot cry : while men lie in the womb of their natural estate, they cannot pray effectually, but when they are born of the Spirit, then they cry Abba, Father. Prayer is nothing but the soul's breathing itself into the bosom of its Father. It is a sweet and familiar intercourse with God ; as soon as ever the Spirit of God comes into the heart, it sets it a praying ; no sooner was Paul converted, but the next word is, 'Behold he prayeth,' Acts ix. 11. It is reported in the life of Luther, when he prayed, it was with so much reverence, as if he were praying to God, and with so much boldness, as if he had been speaking to his friend. And Eusebius reports of Constantine the emperor, that every day he used to shut up himself in some secret place in his palace, and there on bended knees did make his devout prayers and soliloquies to God ; God's Spirit tunes the strings of the affections, and then we make melody in prayer. For any to say in derision, You pray by the Spirit, is a blasphemy against the Spirit : it is a main work of the Spirit of God in the hearts of his children to help them to pray, Gal. iv. 6. 'Because ye are sons, God hath sent the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.'

*Quest.* But many of the children of God have not such abilities to express themselves in prayer ; how then doth the Spirit help their infirmities ?

*Ans.* Though they have not always the gifts of the Spirit in prayer, yet they have the groans of

the Spirit, Rom. viii. 26. Gifts are the ornament of prayer, but not the life of prayer. A carcass may be hung with jewels. Tho' the Spirit may deny fluency of speech, yet it gives fervency of desire, and such prayers are most prevalent. The prayers which the Spirit indites in the hearts of God's children, have these threefold qualifications.

1. The prayers of God's children are believing prayers: prayer is the key, faith is the hand that turns it; faith feathers the arrow of prayer, and makes it pierce the throne of grace, Matth. xxi. 22. 'Whatever ye shall ask in prayer believing, ye shall receive.' Whereupon, saith Hierom, I would not presume to pray, unless I bring faith along with me; to pray and not believe, is (as one saith) a kind of jeer offered to God; as if we thought either he did not hear, or he would not grant.

That faith may be animated in prayer, we must bring Christ in our arms when we appear before God, 1 Sam. vii. 9. 'And Samuel took a sucking Lamb, and offered it for a burnt-offering, and Samuel cried unto the Lord for Israel, and the Lord heard him;' this sucking Lamb typified Christ. When we come to God in prayer, we must bring the Lamb Christ along with us. Themistocles carried the king's son in his arms, and so pacified the king when he was angry; the children of God present Christ in the arms of their faith.

2. The prayers of God's children, emitted by the Spirit, are ardent prayers, 'Ye have received the Spirit, whereby we cry Abba, Father,' Rom. viii. 15. Father, that implies faith; we cry, that implies fervency. The incense was to be laid on burning coals, Lev. xvi. 12. The incense was a type of prayer; the burning coals of ardency in prayer; 'Elias prayed earnestly,' James v. 17. In the Greek it is, IN PRAYING HE PRAYED; that is, he did it

with vehemency; in prayer, the heart must boil over with the heat of affection. Prayer is compared to groans unutterable, it alludes to a woman that is in pangs. We should be in pangs when we are travelling for mercy; such prayer 'commands God himself,' Isa. xlv. 11.

3. The prayers of God's children are heart-cleansing prayers, they purge out sin; many pray against sin, and sin against prayer! God's children do not only pray against sin, but pray down sin.

3. 'The Spirit of God hath a witnessing work in the heart; God's children have not only the influence of the Spirit, but the witness, Rom. viii. 16, 'The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.' There is a three-fold witness a child of God hath; the witness of the Word, the witness of Conscience, the witness of the Spirit; the Word makes the major proposition; he who is in such a manner qualified, is a child of God. Conscience makes the minor; but Thou art so divinely qualified; the Spirit makes the conclusion, therefore Thou art a child of God; the Spirit joins with the witness of conscience, Rom. viii. 16, 'The Spirit witnesseth with our spirits;' the Spirit teacheth conscience to search the records of Scripture, and find its evidences for heaven, it helps conscience to spell out its name in a promise, it bears witness with our spirit.

*Quest.* But how shall I know the witness of the Spirit from a delusion?

*Ans.* The Spirit of God always witnesseth according to the word, as the echo answers the voice. Enthusiasts speak much of the Spirit, but they leave the word: that inspiration which is either without the word, or against it, is an imposture. The Spirit of God did indite the word, 2 Pet. i. 21. Now if the Spirit should witness otherwise than according to the word, the Spirit should be divided against itself, it



should be a spirit of contradiction, witnessing one thing for a truth in the word, and another thing different from it in a man's conscience.

4. The fourth sign of God's children, is zeal for God; they are zealous for his day, his truth, his glory: they who are born of God, are impatient of his dishonour. Moses was cool in his own cause, but hot in God's; when the people of Israel had wrought folly in the golden calf, he breaks the tables: when saint Paul saw the people of Athens given to idolatry, 'his spirit was stirred in him,' Acts xvii. 16. In the Greek it is, his spirit was embittered, or, as the word may signify, he was in a paroxysm or burning fit of zeal. He could not contain, but with this fire of zeal dischargeth against their sin. As we shall answer for idle words, so for sinful silence; it is dangerous in this sense to be possessed with a dumb devil. 'David saith, 'the zeal of God's house had eaten him up,' Ps. lxxix. 9. Many Christians, whose zeal once had almost eaten them up, now they have eaten up their zeal; they are grown tepid and neutral; the breath of preferment blowing upon them, hath cooled their heat: I can never believe that he hath the heart of a child in him, that can be patient when God's glory suffers. Can an ingenuous child endure to hear his father reproached? though we should be silent under God's displeasure, yet not under his dishonour: when there is an holy fire kindled in the heart, it will break forth at the lips: zeal, tempered with holiness, is the white and sanguine, which gives the soul its best complexion.

Of all others, let ministers be impatient when God's glory is impeached and eclipsed. A minister without zeal, is like salt that hath lost its savour. Zeal will make men take injuries done to God, as done to themselves: it is reported of Chrysostom, that he reproved any sin against God, as if he him-

self had received a personal wrong. Let not ministers be either shaken with fear, or seduced with flattery; God never made ministers to be as false glasses, to make bad faces look fair; for want of this fire of zeal, they are in danger of another fire, even the burning lake, Rev. xxi. 8. into which the fearful shall be cast.

5. Those who are God's children, and are born of God, are of a more noble and celestial spirit than men of the world, they mind things above: 1 John v. 4. 'Whosoever is born of God overcometh the world.' The children of God live in an higher region, they are compared to eagles, Isa. xl. 31. in regard of their sublimeness and heavenly-mindedness; their souls are fled aloft, Christ is in their heart, Col. i. 27. and the world is under their feet, Rev. xii. 1. Men of the world are ever tumbling in thick clay; they are not eagles, but earth-worms; the saints are of another spirit, they are born of God, and walk with God, as the child walks with the father. Noah walked with God, Gen. vi. 9. God's children show their high pedigree in their heavenly conversation, Phil. iii. 21.

6. Another sign of adoption is love to them that are children. God's children are knit together with the bond of love; as all the members of the body are knit together by several nerves and ligaments: if we are 'born of God,' then we 'love the brotherhood,' 1 Pet. ii. 17. he that loves the person loves the picture: the children of God are his walking pictures; and if we are of God, we love those who have his effigies and portraiture drawn upon their souls: if we are born of God, we love the saints notwithstanding their infirmities; children love one another, though they have some imperfections of nature, a squint-eye, or a crooked back. We love gold in ore, though there be some drossiness in it; the best saints have their blemishes; We read of 'the spots of God's children,' Deut. xxxii. 5. A

saint in this life, is like a fair face with a scar in it: if we are born of God, we love his children though they are poor; we love to see the image and picture of our Father, though hung in ever so poor a frame, we love to see a rich Christ in a poor man. And if we are children of the Highest, we show our love to God's children,

1. By prizing their persons above others: he who is born of God, 'honoureth him that feareth the Lord,' Psal. xv. 5. The saints are 'the dearly beloved of God's soul,' Jer. xii. 7. They are his jewels, Mal. iii. 17. They are of the true blood-royal; and he who is divinely adopted, sets an higher estimate upon these, than upon others.

2. We show our love to the children of God, by prizing their company above others. Children love to associate and be together; the communion of saints is precious. Christ's doves will flock together in company; Psal. cxix. 63. 'I am a companion of all them that fear thee;' though a child of God is courteous to all; we read that Abraham bowed himself to the children of Heth,' Gen. xxiii. 7. A child of God hath a love of civility to all, but a love of complacency only to such as are fellow-heirs with him of the same inheritance.

By this persons may try their adoption; it appears plainly that they are not the children of God, who hate those that are born of God; they soil and black the silver wings of Christ's doves, by their aspersive reproaches; they cannot endure the society of the saints. As vultures hate sweet smells, and are killed with them; so the wicked love not to come near the godly, they cannot abide the precious perfume of their graces; they hate these sweet smells; it is a sign they are of the serpent's brood, who hate the seed of the woman.

7. The seventh sign of God's children is, to delight to be much in God's presence. Children love to be in the presence of their father; where the King

is, there is the court; where the presence of God is, there is heaven; God is in a special manner present in his ordinances, they are the Ark of his presence. Now if we are children, we love to be much in holy duties; in the use of ordinances we draw near to God, we come into our Father's presence; in prayer we have secret conference with God; the soul while it is praying, is as it were parlying with God. In the word we hear God speaking from heaven to us; and how doth every child of God delight to hear his Father's voice! In the sacrament God kisseth his children with the kisses of his lips; he gives them a smile of his face, and a privy-seal of his love; oh it is good to draw near to God, Psal. lxxiii. 28. It is sweet being in his presence: every true child of God saith, 'a day in thy courts is better than a thousand,' Psal. lxxxiv. 10. Slighters of ordinances are none of God's children, because they care not to be in his presence; they love the tavern better than the temple. 'Cain went out from the presence of the Lord,' Gen. iv. 16. not that he could go out of God's sight, Psal. cxxxix. 7. but the meaning is, Cain went from the church of God, where the Lord gave visible signs of his presence to his people.

8. The eighth sign, is, compliance with the will of our heavenly Father. A childlike heart answers to God's call, as the echo answers to the voice; it is like the flower that opens and shuts with the sun; so it opens to God, and shuts to temptation; this is the motto of a new-born saint, 'Speak, Lord; thy servant heareth,' 1 Sam. iii. 9. When God bids his children pray in their closets, mortify sin, suffer for his name, they are ambitious to obey, they will lay down their lives at their Father's call. Hypocrites court God, and speak him fair, but refuse to go on his errand; they are not children, but rebels.

9. The last sign is, he who is a child of God,

will labour to make others the children of God; the holy seed of grace propagates, Gal. iv. 19. Phil. 10. He who is of the seed royal, will be ambitiously desirous to bring others into the kindred. Art thou divinely adopted, thou wilt studiously endeavour to make thy child a child of the Most High. There are two reasons why a godly parent will endeavour to bring his child into the heavenly kindred.

1. Out of conscience. A good parent sees the injury he hath done his child; he hath conveyed the plague of sin to him, and in conscience he will endeavour to make some recompense; In the old law, he that had smitten and wounded another, was bound to see him healed, and pay for his cure. Parents have given their children a wound in their souls, and therefore must do what in them lies, by admonition, prayers, tears, to see the wound healed.

2. Out of a flaming zeal to the honour of God. He who hath tasted God's love in adoption, looks upon himself as engaged to bring God all the glory he can; if he hath a child or acquaintance that are strangers to God, he would gladly promote the work of grace in their hearts; it is a glory to Christ, when multitudes are born to him.

How far are they from being God's children, who have no care to bring others into the family of God! to blame are those masters, who mind more their servants' work, than their souls; to blame are those parents, who are regardless of their children; they do not drop in principles of knowledge into them, but suffer them to have their head; they will let them lie and swear, but not ask blessing; read play-books, but not scripture.

*Object.* 1. But say some, to catechise and teach our children, is to take God's name in vain.

*Ans.* 1. Is the fulfilling God's command taking his name in vain? Deut. vi. 6, 7. 'These words

which I command thee this day, thou shalt teach them diligently to thy children.' Prov. xxii. 6. 'Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.' Eph. vi. 4. 'And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.' This threefold cord of scripture is not easily broken.

2. The saints of old were continually grafting holy knowledge in their children, Gen. xviii. 19. 'I know that Abraham will command his children, and they shall keep the way of the Lord.' 1 Chron. xxviii. 9. 'And thou, Solomon, my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart.' Sure Abraham and David did not take God's name in vain. What need is there of instilling holy instructions to over-top the poisonous weeds of sin that grow? As husbandmen, when they have planted young trees, they set stays to them, to keep them from bending; so children are young plants, the heavenly precepts of their parents are like stays about them, to keep them from bending to error and profaneness. When can there be a fitter season to disseminate and infuse knowledge into children, than in their minority? Now is a time to give them the breast, and let them suck in the sincere milk of the word, 1 Pet. ii. 2.

*Obj.* 2. But it is to no purpose to teach our children the knowledge of God; they have no sense of spiritual things, nor are they the better for our instructions.

*Ans.* 1. We read in scripture of children who, by virtue of instruction, have had their tender years sanctified: Timothy's mother and grandmother taught him from his cradle, 2 Tim. iii. 15. 'And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures.' Timothy sucked in religion, as it were, with his milk; we read of young children who cried Ho-

sanna to Christ, and did trumpet forth his praises, Matt. xxi. 15. And sure those children of Tyre had some seeds of good wrought in them, in that they shewed their love to Paul, and would help him on his way to the sea shore, Acts xxi. 5. 'They all brought us on our way, with wives and children.' Saint Paul had a convoy of young saints to bring him to take ship.

*Ans. 2.* Suppose our counsel and instruction doth not at present prevail with our children, it may afterwards take effect. The seed a man sows in his ground, doth not presently spring up, but in its season it brings forth a crop; he that plants a wood, doth not see the full growth till many years after: if we must not instruct our children, because at present they reap not the benefit, by the same reason we should not baptize our children, because at present they have not the sense of baptism: nay, by the same reason ministers should not preach the word, because, at present, many of their hearers have no benefit.

*Ans. 3.* If our counsels and admonitions prevail not with our children, yet 'we have delivered our own souls.' There is comfort in the discharge of conscience, we must let alone issues and events; duty is our work, success is God's.

All which considered, should make parents whet holy instructions upon their children; they who are of the family of God, and whom he hath adopted for children, will endeavour that their children may be more God's children than theirs; they will travail in birth till Christ be formed in them. A true saint is a loadstone that will be still drawing others to God. Let this suffice to have spoken of the signs of adoption. I proceed.

## SECT. 5.

*Discovering God's Love in making us Children.*

The next particular to be discussed, is, the love of God in making us children, 1 John iii. 1. 'Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!' God shewed power in making us creatures, but love in making us sons. Plato gave God thanks that he had made him a man and not a beast; but what cause have they to adore God's love, who hath made them children? the apostle puts an *ecce* to it, *behold!* That we may the better behold God's love in making us children, consider three things.

1. We were deformed, Ezek. xvi. 6, 8. 'When I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, it was the time of love.' Mordecai adopted Esther because she was fair; but we were in our blood, and then God adopted us; he did not adopt us when we were clothed with the robe of innocence in paradise, when we were hung with the jewels of holiness, and were white and ruddy; but when we were in blood, and had our leprous spots upon us; the time of our loathing, was the time of God's loving.

2. As we did not deserve to be made children, so neither did we desire it. No landed man will force another to become his heir against his will; if a king should go to adopt a beggar, and make him heir of the crown; if the beggar should refuse the king's favour, and say, I had rather be as I am, I would be a beggar still; the king would take it in high contempt of his favour, and would not adopt him against his will. Thus it was with us, we had no willingness to be made children; we would have been begging still, but God, out of his infinite mer-



cy and indulgence, not only offers to make us children but makes us willing to embrace the offer, Ps. cx. 3. 'Behold what manner of love is this!'

3. Which is the wonder of love, that God should adopt us for his children when we were enemies. If a man would make another heir of his land, he would adopt one that is near akin to him, no man would adopt an enemy; but that God should make us children when we were enemies; that he should make us heirs to the crown, when we were traitors to the crown; oh amazing, astopishing love! 'Behold what manner of love is this!' We were not akin to God, we had by sin lost and forfeited our pedigree; we had done God all the injury and spite we could, defaced his image, violated his law, trampled upon his mercies, and when we had angered him, he adopted us: what stupendous love was this; such love was never shewn to the angels: when they fell (though they were of a more noble nature, and in all probability might have done God more service than we can, yet) God never vouchsafed this privilege of adoption to them; he did not make them children, but prisoners; they were heirs only to the treasures of wrath, Rom. ii. 5.

*Use.* Let all who are thus nearly related to God, stand admiring his love; when they were like Saul, breathing forth enmity against God; when their hearts stood out as garrisons against him, the Lord conquered their stubbornness with kindness, and not only pardoned, but adopted them; it is hard to say which is greater, the mystery or the mercy; this is such amazing love, as we shall be searching into, and adoring to all eternity; the bottom of it cannot be fathomed by any angel in heaven; God's love in making us children, is,

1. A rich love; it is love in God to feed us, but it is rich love to adopt us; it is love to give us a

crumb, but it is rich love to make us heirs to a crown.

2. It is a distinguishing love; that when God hath passed by so many millions, he should cast a favourable aspect upon thee! most are cut out for fuel, and are made vessels of wrath; and that God should say to thee, Thou art my son, here's the mirror of mercy, the meridian of love! Who, O who can tread upon these hot coals, and his heart not burn in love to God?

SECT. 6.

*Declaring the honour of God's Children.*

6. The sixth particular is, the honour and renown of God's children; for the illustration of this observe two things.

1. God makes a precious account of them. 2. He looks upon them as persons of honour.

1. God makes a precious account of them, Isa. xliii. 4. 'Since thou wast precious in my sight,' &c. A father prizeth his child above his estate; how dearly did Jacob prize Benjamin? his 'life was bound up in the life of the lad,' Gen. xlv. 30. God makes a precious valuation of his children; the wicked are of no account with God, they are vile persons, Nah. i. 14. 'I will make thy grave, for thou art vile; therefore the wicked are compared to chaff, Psal. i. 4. to dross, Psal. cxix. 119. There is little use of a wicked man while he lives, and no loss of him when he dies; there is only a little chaff blown away, which may well be spared: But God's children are precious in his sight, they are his jewels, Mal. iii. 17. The wicked are but lumber, which serves only to cumber the ground; but God's children are his jewels, locked up in the cabinet of his decree from all eternity. God's chil-

dren are the apple of his eye, Zech. ii. 8. very dear and tender to him, and the eyelid of his special providence doth cover them; the Lord accounts every thing of his children precious.

1. Their name is precious; the wicked do leave their name for a curse, Isa. lxv. 15. The names of God's children are embalmed, Isa. lx. 15. So precious are their names, that God enters them down in the book of life, and Christ carries them on his breast. How precious must their name needs be, who have God's own name written upon them; Rev. iii. 12. 'Him that overcometh, I will write upon him the name of my God.'

2. Their prayers are precious. Cant. ii. 14. 'O my dove, in the cliffs of the rock, let me hear thy voice, for sweet is thy voice.' Every child of God is this dove; prayer is the voice of the dove, and sweet is this voice; the prayer of God's children is as sweet to him as music; a wicked man's prayer is as the howling of a dog, Hos. vii. 14. The prayer of the saints, is as the singing of the bird; the finger of God's Spirit toucheth the lute-strings of their hearts, they make melody to the Lord, Isa. lvi. 7. 'Their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar.'

3. Their tears are precious, they drop as pearls from their eyes. 'I have seen thy tears,' Isa. xxxviii.

5. The tears of God's children drop as precious wine into God's bottle: Ps. lvi. 8. 'Put thou my tears into thy bottle.' A tear from a broken heart, is a present for the King of heaven.

4. Their blood is precious, Psal. cxvi. 15. 'Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.' This is the blood God will chiefly make inquisition for: Athaliah shed the blood of the king's children, 2 Kings xi. 1. The saints are the children of the Most High, and such as shed their blood, shall pay dear for it, Rev. xvi. 6. 'Thou hast given them blood to drink, for they are worthy.'

2. God looks upon his children as persons of honour, Isa. xliii. 4. 'Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable,' &c.

1. God esteems them honourable, he calls them a 'crown, and a royal diadem,' Isa. lxii. 3. He calls them his glory, Isa. xlv. 13. 'Israel my glory.'

2. God makes them honourable; as a king creates dukes, marquisses, earls, barons, &c. so God installs his children into honour; he creates them noble persons, persons of renown. David thought it no small honour to be the king's son-in-law; 1 Sam. xviii. 18. 'Who am I, that I should be son-in-law to the king?' what an infinite honour is it to be the children of the high God, to be of the blood-royal of heaven? the saints are of an ancient family, they are sprung 'from the Ancient of days,' Dan. vii. 9. That is the best pedigree which is fetched from heaven; here the youngest child is an heir, a co-heir with Christ, who is heir of all, Heb. i. 2. Rom. viii. 17.

Consider the honour of God's children. 1. Positively, 2. Comparatively.

1. *Positively.* 1. They have the titles of honour, they are called kings, Rev. i. 6. 'The excellent of the earth,' Psalm xvi. 2. 'Vessels of honour,' 2 Tim. ii. 21.

2. They have their scutcheon; you may see the saints' scutcheon or coat-armour, the scripture hath set forth their heraldry; sometimes they give the lion, in regard of their courage, Prov. i. 28. Sometimes they give the eagle, in regard of their sublimeness; they are ever flying up to heaven upon the two wings of faith and love, Isa. xl. 31. 'They shall mount up with wings as eagles;' sometimes they give the dove, in regard of their meekness and innocency. This shews the children of God to be persons of renown.

2. Consider the honour of God's children comparatively; and this comparison is double.

Compare the children of God, 1. With Adam.  
2. With the angels.

1. Compare the children of God with Adam in a state of innocency. Adam was a person of honour, he was the sole monarch of the world; all the creatures did vail to him as their sovereign; he was placed in the garden of Eden, which was a paradise of pleasure; he was crowned with all the contentments of the earth; nay more, Adam was God's lively picture, he was made in the likeness of God himself; yet the state of the meanest of God's children by adoption, is far more excellent and honourable than the state of Adam was, when he wore the robe of innocency; for Adam's condition, though it was glorious, yet mutable, and was soon lost; Adam was a bright star, yet a falling star; but God's children by adoption, are in a state unalterable. Adam had a possibility of standing; but believers have an impossibility of falling; once adopted, and ever adopted; as Isaac said, when he had given the blessing to Jacob, 'I have blessed him and he shall be blessed,' Gen. xxvii. 33. So may we say of all God's children, they are adopted, and they shall be adopted; so that God's children are in a better and more glorious condition now, than Adam was in all his regal honour and majesty.

2. Let us ascend as high as heaven, and compare God's children with the glorious and blessed angels; God's children are equal to the angels, in some sense above them; then, sure, they must needs be persons of honour.

1. God's children are equal to the angels; this is acknowledged by some of the angels themselves, Rev. ix. 10. 'I am thy fellow-servant;' here is a parallel made between John the Divine and the an-

gel; the angel saith to John, 'I am thy fellow-servant.'

2. The children of God by adoption, are in some sense above angels, and that two ways.

1. The angels are servants to God's children, Heb. i. 14. Though they are glorious spirits, yet ministering spirits. The angels are the saints' servants; we have examples in scripture of angels attending the persons of God's children; we read of angels waiting upon Abraham, Moses, Daniel, the virgin Mary, &c. Nor do the angels only service to God's children while they live, but at their death too. Lazarus had a convoy of angels to carry him into the paradise of God; thus we see the children of God have a pre-eminence and dignity above the angels; the angels are their servants both living and dying; and this is the more to be observed, because it is never said in scripture that the children of God are servants to the angels.

2. God's children are above the angels, because Christ, by taking their nature, hath ennobled and honoured it above the angelical, Heb. ii. 16. 'He in nowise took the nature of angels,' God by uniting us to Christ, hath made us nearer to himself than the angels; the children of God are members of Christ, Eph. v. 30. this was never said of the angels: how can they be the members of Christ, who are of a different nature from him? indeed, metaphorically and improperly Christ may be called the head of the angels, as they are subject to him, 1 Pet. iii. 22. But that Christ is head of the angels in that near and sweet conjunction, as he is the head of believers, we nowhere find in scripture; in this respect, therefore, I may clearly assert the children of God have a superiority and honour even above the angels; though by creation they are 'a little lower than the angels,' yet, by adoption and mystical union, they are above the angels.

*Use.* How may this comfort a child of God in midst either of calumny or penury ! he is a person of honour, he is above the angels. A gentleman that is fallen to decay, will sometimes boast of his parentage and noble blood ; so a Christian who is poor in the world, yet by virtue of his adoption, he is of the family of God, he hath the true blood-royal running in his veins, he hath a fairer coat of arms to shew than the angels themselves.

### SECT. 7.

#### *The high Privileges of God's children,*

7. The seventh particular to be explained, is, to shew the glorious privileges of God's children ; and what I shall say now, belongs not to the wicked ; it is children's bread: the fruit of paradise was to be kept with a flaming sword ; so these sweet and heart-ravishing privileges are to be kept with a flaming sword, that impure sensual persons may not touch them. There are twelve rare privileges which belong to the children of God.

1. *Privilege,* If we are children, then God will be full of tender love and affection towards us ; a father compassionates his child, Psal. ciii. 13. 'Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.' Oh the yearning of God's bowels to his children ! Jer. xxxi. 20. 'Is Ephraim my dear son ? is he a pleasant child ? my bowels are troubled for him, I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord !' Towards the wicked God's wrath is kindled, Psal. ii. 12. Towards them that are children, God's repentings are kindled, Hosea xi. 8. Mercy and pity doth as naturally flow from our heavenly Father, as light from the sun.

*Obj.* 1. But God is angry, and writes bitter things ; how doth this stand with love ?

**Ans.** God's love and his anger towards his children may stand together, he is angry in love; Rev. iii. 19. 'As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten; we may have as much need of afflictions as ordinances: a bitter pill may be as needful for preserving health as a Julap or cordial. God afflicts with the same love as he adopts; God is most angry when he is not angry; his hand is heaviest when it is lightest; affliction is an argument of sonship, Heb. xii. 7. 'If you endure chastening God deal-eth with you as with sons.' Oh saith one, sure God doth not love me, I am none of his children, because he doth follow me with such sore afflictions: Why, it is a sign of childship to be sometimes under the rod; God had one son without sin, but no son without stripes; God puts his children to the school of the cross, and there they learn best. God speaks to us in the word, children be not proud, do not love the world, walk circumspectly; but we are dull of hearing; nay, 'we stop the ear.' Jer. xxii. 21. 'I spake to thee in thy prosperity, but thou saidst I will not hear.' Now, saith God, I shall lose my child if I do not correct him; then God in love smites, that he may save; Aristotle speaks of a bird that lives among thorns, yet sings sweetly; God's children make the best melody in their heart, when God 'hedgeth their way with thorns,' Hos. ii. 14. Afflictions are refining, Prov. xvii. 3. 'The fining pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold.' Fiery trials make golden Christians; afflictions are purifying, Dan. xii. 10. 'Many shall be tried and made white.' We think God is going to destroy us, but he only lays us a whitening; some birds will not hatch but in time of thunder. Christians are commonly best in affliction; God will make his children at last bless him for sufferings; the eye that sin shuts, affliction opens; when Manasseh was in chains, 'then he knew the Lord



was God,' 2 Chron. xxxiii. 13. Afflictions fit for heaven; first the stones in Solomon's temple were hewn and polished, and then set up into a building. First the saints (who are called lively stones) must be hewn and carved by sufferings, as the corner stone was, and so made meet for the celestial building; and is there not love in all God's fatherly castigations?

*Obj.* 2. But sometimes God's children are under the black clouds of desertion; is not this far from love?

Concerning desertion, I must needs say this is the saddest condition that can betide God's children; when the sun is gone, the dew falls; when the sunlight of God's countenance is removed, then the dew of tears fall from the eyes of the saints. In desertion God rains hell out of heaven, (to use Calvin's expression;) 'The arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirits,' Job vi. 4. This is the poisoned arrow that wounds to the heart. Desertion is a taste of the torments of the damned. God saith, 'In a little wrath I hid my face from thee,' Isa. liv. 8. Lord dost thou call that a little wrath when thou hidest thy face? is it but a little? What can be more bitter to me than the eclipsing of thy face? God is in scripture called a light and a fire, the deserted soul feels the fire, but doth not see the light. But yet thou who art adopted mayest spell love in all this. They say of Hercules' club, that it was made of the wood of olive; the olive is an emblem of peace; so God's club, whereby he beats down the soul in desertion, hath something of the olive; there is peace and mercy in it. I shall hold forth a spiritual rainbow, wherein the children of God may see the love of their Father in the midst of the clouds of desertion. Therefore I answer,

1. In time of desertion God leaves in his children

a seed of comfort, 1 John iii. 9. 'His seed remaineth in him.' This seed of God is a seed of comfort. Though God's children in desertion want the seal of the Spirit, yet they have the unction of the Spirit, 1 John ii. 27. Though they want the sun, yet they have a daystar in their hearts; as the tree in winter, though it hath lost its leaves and fruit, yet there is sap in the root: so, in the winter of desertion, there is the sap of grace in the root of the heart; as it is with the sun masking itself with a cloud, when it denies light to the earth, yet it gives forth its influence: so, though God's dear adopted ones may lose the light of his countenance, yet they have the influence of his grace.

*Quest.* What grace appears in the time of desertion?

*Ans.* 1. An high prizing of God's love. If God should say to the deserted soul, what wilt thou, and it shall be granted to half of the kingdom? he would reply, Lord, that I might see thee, as I was wont in the sanctuary; that I may have one golden beam of thy love; the deserted soul slights all other things in comparison; it is not gardens, or orchards, or the most delicious objects that can give him contentment; they are like music to a sad heart; he desires as Absalom, 'to see the king's face.'

2. A lamenting after the Lord. It is the saddest day with him when the Sun of righteousness is eclipsed, a child of God can better bear the world's stroke than God's absence; he is even melted into tears: the clouds of desertion produce spiritual rain; and whence is this weeping but from love?

3. Willingness to suffer any thing, so he may have a sight of God. A child of God could be content with Simon of Cyrene, to carry the cross, if he were sure Christ were upon it; he could willingly die, if with Simeon he might die with Christ in his arms. Behold here, the seed of God in a believer; the

work of sanctification, when he wants the wine of consolation.

*Ans. 2.* God hath a design of mercy in hiding his face from his adopted ones.

*First;* It is for the trial of grace; and there are two graces brought to trial in time of desertion.

1. Faith. When we can believe against sense and feeling; when we want an experience, yet can trust to a promise; when we have not the kisses of God's mouth, yet can cleave to the word of his mouth; this is faith indeed; here is the sparkling of the diamond.

2. Love. When God smiles upon us, it is not much to love him; but when he seems 'to put us away in anger,' Psal. xxvii. 9. now to love him, and be as the lime, the more water is thrown upon it, the hotter it burns, this is love indeed. That love sure is strong as death, Cant. viii. 6. which the waters of desertion cannot quench.

*Secondly,* It is for the exercise of grace: we are all for comfort; if it might be put to our choice, we would be ever upon mount Tabor, looking into Canaan: we are loath to be in trials, agonies, desertions, as if God could not love us except he had us in his arms. It is hard to lie long in the lap of spiritual joy, and not fall asleep. Too much sunshine causeth a drouth in our graces; oftentimes, when God lets down comfort into the heart, we begin to let down care. As it is with musicians, before they have money they will play you many a sweet lesson, but as soon as you throw them down money, they are gone, you hear no more of them. Before joy and assurance, O the sweet music of prayer and repentance! but when God throws down the comforts of his Spirit, we either leave off duty, or at least slacken the strings of our viol, and grow remiss in it. Thou art taken with the money, but God is taken with the music; grace is better than

comfort. Rachel is more fair, but Leah is more fruitful. Comfort is fair to look on, but grace hath the fruitful womb; now, the only way to exercise grace, and make it more vigorous and lively, is sometimes to walk in darkness and have no light. Isa. l. 10. Faith is a star that shines brightest in the night of desertion; 'I said I am cast out of thy sight, yet will I look again toward thy holy temple,' Jonah ii. 4. Grace usually puts forth its most heroidal acts at such a time.

*Ans. 3.* God may forsake his children in regard of vision, but not in regard of union. Thus it was with Jesus Christ when he cried out, my God, my God. There was not a separation of the union between him and his Father, only a suspension of the vision. God's love, through the interposition of our sins, may be darkened and eclipsed, but still he is a Father. The sun may be hid in a cloud, but it is not out of the firmament. The promises, in time of desertion, may be as it were sequestered; we have not that comfort from them as formerly, but still the believer's title holds good in law.

*Ans. 4.* When God hides his face from his child, his heart may be towards him; as Joseph when he spake roughly to his brethren, and made them believe he would take them for spies, still his heart was towards them, and he was as full of love as he could hold; he was fain to go aside and weep: so, God is full of love to his children, even when he seems to look strange. And as Moses his mother, when she put her child into the ark of bulrushes, and went away a little from it, yet still her eye was towards it; 'the babe wept;' aye, and the mother wept too: so God, when he goes aside as if he had forsaken his children, yet he is full of sympathy and love towards them. God may change his countenance, but not break his covenant. It is one thing for God to desert, another thing to disinherit, Hos.

xi. 8. 'How shall I give thee up, O Ephraim?' It is a metaphor taken from a father going to disinherit his son, and while he is setting his hand to the deed, his bowels begin to melt, and to yearn over him, and he thinks thus within himself, 'Tho' he be a prodigal child, yet he is a child, I will not put off the entail: so saith God, 'How shall I give thee up?' though Ephraim hath been a rebellious son, yet he is a son, I will not disinherit him. God's thoughts may be full of love, when there is a veil upon his face; the Lord may change his dispensation towards his children, but not his disposition; he may have the look of an enemy, but the heart of a father: so that the believer may say, I am adopted, and let God do what he will with me, let him take the rod or the staff, it is all one, he loves me.

2. *Privil.* The second adoptional privilege is this, if we are children, then God will bear with many infirmities. A father bears much with a child he loves, Mal. iii. 17. 'I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.' We oft grieve the Spirit, abuse kindness; God will pass by much in his children, Numb. xxiii. 21. 'He hath not seen iniquity in Jacob;' his love doth not make him blind; he sees sin in his people, but not with an eye of revenge, but pity; he sees sin in his children, as a physician doth a disease in his patient; he hath not seen iniquity in Jacob so as to destroy him; God may use the rod, not the scorpion. O how much is God willing to pass by in his children, because they are children! God takes notice of the good that is in his children, and passeth by the infirmity. God doth quite contrary to us; we oft take notice of the evil that is in others, and overlook the good. Our eye is upon the flaw in the diamond, but we observe not its sparkling. But God takes notice of the good that is in his children; God sees their

faith, and winks at their failings. 1 Pet. iii. 6. 'Even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him Lord;' the Holy Ghost mentions not her unbelief, and laughing at the promise, but takes notice of the good in her, *viz.* her obedience to her husband; 'she obeyed Abraham, calling him Lord.' God puts his finger upon the scars and infirmities of his children; how much did God wink at in Israel his first-born. Israel oft provoked him with their murmurings, Deut. i. 27. but God answered their murmurings with mercies: he spared them as a father spares his son.

3. *Privil.* The third privilege is this, if we are children, then God will accept of our imperfect services. A parent takes any thing in good part from his child; God accepts of the will for the deed, 2 Cor. viii. 12. oftentimes we come with broken prayers, but if we are children, God spells out our meaning, and will take our prayers as a grateful present; a father loves to hear his child speak, tho' he doth but slip and stammer, Isa. xxviii. 14. Like a 'crane, so did I chatter.' Good Hezekiah looked upon his praying as chattering, yet that prayer was heard, verse 5. a sigh and a groan from an humble heart goes up as the smoke of incense. Ps. xxxviii. 9. 'My groaning is not hid from thee.' When all the glistering shews of hypocrites evaporate, and come to nothing, a little that a child of God doth in sincerity is crowned with acceptance; a father is glad of a letter from his son, though there are blots in the letter, though there are false spellings and broken English; O what blottings are there in our holy things? what broken English sometimes? yet coming from broken hearts it is accepted; though there be weakness in duty, yet if there be willingness, the Lord is much taken with it. Saith God, it is my child, and he would do better, Eph. i. 6. 'He hath accepted us in the Beloved.'

4. *Privil.* If we are children then God will provide for us: a father will take care for his children; he gives them allowance, and lays up a portion, 2 Cor. xii. 14. so doth our heavenly Father.

1. He gives us our allowance, Gen. xlviii. 15. 'The God which fed me all my life long unto this day.' Whence is our daily bread, but from his daily care? God will not let his children starve, though our unbelief is ready sometimes to question his goodness, and say, Can God prepare a table? See what arguments Christ brings to prove God's paternal care for his children, Matt. vi. 26. 'Behold the fowls of the air, they sow not, neither do they reap, yet your heavenly Father feedeth them.' Doth a man feed his bird, and will he not feed his child? Luke xii. 27. 'Consider the lilies of the field how they grow, they toil not, they spin not; if then God so clothe the grass,' &c. Doth God clothe the lilies, and will he not clothe his lambs? 1 Pet. v. 7. 'The Lord careth for us.' As long as his heart is full of love, so long his head will be full of care. This should be as physic to kill the worm of unbelief.

2. As God gives his children a viaticum, or bait by the way, so he lays up a portion for them, Luke xii. 32. 'It is your Father's good pleasure to give you a kingdom;' our Father keeps the purse, and will give us enough to bear our charges here, and when at death we take shipping, and shall be set upon the shore of eternity, then will our heavenly Father bestow upon us a kingdom immutable, and unfading; lo here a portion which can never be summed up.

5. *Privil.* If we are children, then God will shield off dangers from us; a father will protect his child from injuries; God ever lies sentinel to keep off evil from his children.

1. Temporal evil. 2. Spiritual evil.

1. God screens off temporal evil. There are many casualties and contingencies which are incident to life; God mercifully prevents them; he keeps watch and ward for his children, Psalm vii. 10. 'my defence is of God.' Psal. cxxi. 3. 'He that keeps Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.' The eye of Providence is ever awake; God gives his angels charge over his children, Psal. xci. 11. a believer hath a guard of angels for his life-guard; we read of the wings of God in scripture: as the breast of his mercy feeds his children, so the wings of his power cover them; how miraculously did God preserve Israel his first-born! he did with his wings sometimes cover, sometimes carry them, Exod. xix. 4. 'He bare you as upon eagles' wings;' an emblem of God's providential care; the eagle fears no bird from above to hurt her young, only the arrow from beneath; therefore she carries them upon her wings, that the arrow must first hit her before it come at her young ones. Thus God carries children upon the wings of providence; and they are such, that there is no clipping these wings, nor can any arrow hurt them.

2. God shields off spiritual evils from his children, Psal. xci. 10. 'There shall no evil befall thee? God doth not say, no afflictions shall befall us, but no evil.

*Quest.* But sometimes evil in this sense befalls the godly, they spot themselves with sin.

*Ans.* But that evil shall not be mortal; as quicksilver is in itself dangerous, but by ointments it is so tempered that it is killed; so sin is in itself deadly, but being tempered with repentance, and mixed with the sacred ointment of Christ's blood, the venomous damning nature of it is taken away.

6. *Privil.* If we are children, then God will reveal to us the great and wonderful things of his law, Matt. xi. 25. 'I thank thee, O Father, Lord



of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.' A father will teach his children; the child goes to his father, 'Father, teach me my lesson;' so David goes to God, Psal. cxliii. 10. 'Teach me to do thy will, for thou art my God.' The Lord glories in this title, Isa. xlviii. 17. 'I am the Lord thy God, which teacheth thee to profit.' God's children have that anointing which teacheth them all things necessary to salvation; they see those mysteries which are veiled over to carnal eyes; as Elisha saw 'those horses and chariots of fire,' which his servant did not see, 2 Kings vi. 17. The adopted see their own sins, Satan's snares, Christ's beauty, which they whom the 'god of the world hath blinded' cannot discern; whence was it that David understood more than the ancients? Ps. cxix. 100. he had a Father to teach him, God was his instructor, Psal. lxxi. 17. 'O God, thou hast taught me from my youth.' Many a child of God complains of ignorance and dullness; remember this, thy Father will be thy tutor; he hath promised to give 'his Spirit to lead thee into all truth,' John vi. 13. And God doth not only inform the understanding, but incline the will; he doth not only teach us what we should do, but enable us to do it, Ezek. xxxvi. 27. 'I will cause you to walk in my statutes. What a glorious privilege is this, to have the star of the word pointing us to Christ, and the loadstone of the Spirit drawing!

7. *Privil.* If we are children, this gives boldness in prayer; the child goes with confidence to his father, and he cannot find in his heart to deny him, Luke xi. 13. 'How much more shall your heavenly Father give his holy Spirit to them that ask him? all the father hath, is for his child; if he comes for money, who is it for but his child? if thou comest to God for pardon, for brokenness of heart, God

cannot deny his child: who doth he keep his mercies in store for, but his children?

And that which may give God's children holy boldness in prayer, is this; when they consider God not only in the relation of a Father, but as having the disposition of a Father. Some parents are of a morose, rugged nature; but God is 'the Father of mercies,' 2 Cor. i. 3. He begets all the bowels in the world; in prayer we should look upon God under this notion, a Father of mercy, sitting upon a throne of grace; we should run to this heavenly Father in all conditions.

1. In our sins; as that sick child, 2 Kings iv. 19. 'He said unto his father, my head, my head!' as soon as he found himself not well, he ran to his father to succour him: so, in case of sin, run to God, My heart, my heart! O this dead heart, Father, quicken it; this hard heart, Father soften it; Father, my heart, my heart!

2. In our tentations: a child, when another strikes him, runs to his father and complains; so when the devil strikes us by his temptations, let us run to our Father; Father, Satan assaults, and hurls in his fiery darts; he would not only wound my peace, but thy glory; Father, take off the tempter; it is thy child that is worried by this red dragon; Father, wilt thou not bruise Satan under my feet? What a sweet privilege is this, when any burden lies upon our spirits, we may go to our Father, and unload all our cares and griefs into his bosom!

8. *Privil.* If we are children, then we are in a state of freedom. Claudius Lysias valued his freedom of Rome at an high rate; a state of sonship is a state of freedom; this is not to be understood in an antinomian sense, that the children of God are freed from the rule of the moral law; this is such a freedom as rebels take: was it ever heard that a child should be freed from duty to his parents? but

the freedom which God's children have, is an holy freedom; they are freed from the law of sin, Rom. viii. 2.

This is the sad misery of an unregenerate person, he is in a state of vassalage, he is under the tyranny of sin. Justin Martyr used to say, it is the greatest slavery in the world for a man to be subject to his own passions: a wicked man is as very a slave as he that works in the galleys; look into his heart, and there are legions of lusts ruling him; he must do what sin will have him; a slave is at the service of an usurping tyrant: if he bid him dig in the mine, hew in the quarries, tug at the oar, he must do it. Thus every wicked man must do what corrupt nature, inspired by the devil, bids him; if sin bids him be drunk, be unchaste, he is at the command of sin, as the ass is at the command of the driver; sin first enslaves, and then damns.

But the children of God, though they are not freed from the in-being of sin, yet they are freed from the law of sin; all sin's commands are like laws repealed, which are not in force; though sin live in a child of God, yet it doth not reign, Rom. vi. 14. 'Sin shall not have dominion over you:' sin hath not a coercive power over a child of God; there is a principle of grace in his heart which gives check to corruption: this is a believer's comfort, though sin be not removed, yet it is subdued; and though he cannot keep sin out, yet he keeps sin under; the saints of God are said to crucify the flesh, Gal. v. 24. Crucifying was a lingering death, first one member died, then another; every child of God crucifies sin, some limb of the old man is ever and anon dropping off; though sin doth not die perfectly, it dies daily; this is the blessed freedom of God's children, they are 'freed from the law of sin,' they are 'led by the Spirit' of God, Rom. viii. 14. This Spirit makes them free and

cheerful in obedience, 2 Cor. iii. 17. 'where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.'

9. *Privil.* If we are children, then we are heirs apparent to all the promises; the promises are called precious, 2 Pet. ii. 4. The promises are a cabinet of jewels, they are breasts full of the milk of the gospel; the promises are enriched with variety, and are suited to a Christian's present condition. Doth he want pardoning grace? there is a promise carries forgiveness in it, Jer. xxxi. 34. Doth he want sanctifying grace? there is a promise of healing, Hos. xiv. 4. Doth he want corroborating grace? there is a promise of strength, Isa. xli. 10. And these promises are the children's bread; the saints are called 'Heirs of the promise,' Heb. vi. 17. There is Christ and heaven in a promise; and there is never a promise in the Bible, but an adopted person may lay a legal claim to it, and say, This is mine.' The natural man, who remains still in the old family, hath nothing to do with these promises? he may read over the promises, as one may read over another man's will or inventory, but hath no right to them; the promises are like a garden of flowers, paled in, and enclosed, which no stranger may gather, only the children of the family. Ishmael was the son of the bond-woman, he had no right to the family; cast out the bond-woman and her son, as Sarah once said to Abraham, Gen. xxi. 10. 'So the unbeliever is not adopted, he is none of the household, and God will say at the day of judgment, cast out this son of the bond-woman into utter darkness, where is weeping and gnashing of teeth.

10. *Privil.* If we are children, then we shall have our Father's blessing, Isa. lxi. 9. 'They are the seed which the Lord hath blessed.' We read that Isaac blessed his son Jacob, Gen. xxvii. 28. 'God give thee of the dew of heaven;' which was not

only a prayer for Jacob, but a prophecy of that happiness and blessing which should come upon him and his posterity. Thus every adopted child hath his heavenly Father's benediction, there is a special blessing distilled in all that he possesseth, *Exod. xxiii. 25. Psal. xxix. 11.* 'The Lord will bless his people with peace: he will not only give them peace, but they shall have it with a blessing; the wicked have the things they enjoy with God's leave, but the adopted have them with God's love; the wicked have them by providence, the saints by promise. Isaac had but one blessing to bestow, *Gen. xxvii. 38.* 'Hast thou but one blessing, my father?' but God hath more blessings than one for his children; he bleſseth them in their souls, bodies, names, estate, posterity; he bleſseth them with the upper springs, and the nether springs; he multiplies to bless them, and his blessing cannot be reversed; as Isaac said concerning Jacob, 'I have blessed him, yea, and he shall be blessed,' *Gen. xxvii. 33.* so God bleſseth his children, and they shall be blessed.

11. *Privil.* If we are children, then all things that fall out shall turn to our good, *Rom. viii. 28.* 'All things work together for good to them that love God.'

1. Good things. 2. Evil things.

1. Good things work for good to God's children.

1. Mercies shall do them good.

1. The mercies of God shall soften them. David's heart was overcome with God's mercy, *2 Sam. vii. 18.* 'who am I? and what is my house?' &c. I who was of a mean family, I who held the shepherd's staff, that now I should hold the royal sceptre! nay, 'Thou hast spoken of thy servant's house for a great while to come:' thou hast made a promise that my children shall sit upon the throne, yea, that the blessed Messiah shall come of my line and

race; 'and is this the manner of man, O Lord God!' as if he had said, Do men shew such kindness undeserved? See how this good man's heart was dissolved and softened by mercy! the flint is soonest broken upon a soft pillow.

2. Mercies make the children of God more fruitful; the ground bears the better crop for the cost that is laid upon it. God gives his children health, and they spend and are spent for Christ; he gives them estates and they 'honour the Lord with their substance; the backs and bellies of the poor are the field where they sow the precious seeds of their charity; a child of God makes his estate a golden clasp to bind his heart faster to God, a footstool to raise him up higher towards heaven.

2. Ordinances shall work for good to God's children.

1. The word preached shall do them good; it is a savour of life, it is a lamp to their feet, and a laver to their hearts: the word preached is a chariot of salvation; it is an ingrafting, and a transforming word; it is the word with the anointing, it not only brings a light with it but eye-salve, anointing their eyes to see that light; the preaching of the word is the lattice where Christ looks forth, and shews himself to his saints; this golden pipe of the sanctuary conveys the water of life. To the wicked the word preached works for evil, even the word of life becomes a savour of death; the same cause may have divers, nay contrary effects; the sun dissolves the ice, but hardens the clay. To the unregenerate and profane, the word is not humbling, but hardening. Jesus Christ, the best of preachers, was to some a rock of offence; the Jews sucked death from his sweet lips; it is sad that the breast should kill any; the wicked suck poison from that breast of ordinances where the children of God suck milk, and are nourished unto salvation.

2. The sacrament works for good to the children of God; in the word preached the saints hear Christ's voice, in the sacrament they have his kiss. The Lord's supper is to the saints 'a feast of fat things;' it is an healing, and a sealing ordinance; in this charger, or rather chalice, a bleeding Saviour is brought in to revive drooping spirits. The sacrament hath glorious effects in the hearts of God's children, it quickens their affections, strengthens their faith, mortifies their sin, revives their hopes, increaseth their joy; it gives a prelibation and foretaste of heaven.

2. Evil things work for good to God's children, Ps. cxii. 4. 'Unto the upright ariseth light in darkness.'

1. Poverty works for good to God's children; it starves their lusts, it enricheth their graces, Jam. ii. v. 'Poor in the world rich in faith.' Poverty sends to prayer; when God hath clipped his children's wings by poverty, they fly swiftest to the throne of grace.

2. Sickness works for their good; it shall bring the body of death into a consumption, 2 Cor. iv. 16. 'Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day;' like those two laurels at Rome, when the one did wither the other did flourish; when the body withers, the soul of a Christian doth flourish. How oft have we seen a lively faith in a languishing body; Hezekiah was better on his sick bed than upon his throne; when he was upon his sick bed he humbles himself and weeps; when he was on his throne, he grew proud, Isa. xxxix. 2. God's children recover by sickness; in this sense 'out of weakness they are made strong,' Heb. xi. 34.

3. Reproach works for good to God's children, it increaseth their grace and their glory.

1. Disgrace increaseth their grace; the husband-

man, by dunging his ground, makes the soil more rich and fertile; God lets the wicked dung his people with reproaches and calumnies, that their hearts may be a richer soil for grace to grow in.

2. Reproach encreaseth their glory; he that unjustly takes from a saint's credit, shall add to his crown; the sun shines brighter after an eclipse; the more a child of God is eclipsed by reproaches, the brighter he shall shine in the kingdom of heaven.

3. Persecution to God's children works for good; the godly may be compared to that plant which Gregory Nazianzen speaks of, it lives by dying, and grows by cutting: the zeal and love of the saints is blown up by sufferings, their joy flourisheth. Tertullian saith, the primitive Christians rejoiced more in their persecutions than in their deliverance.

4. Death works for good to the children of God; it is like the whirlwind to the prophet Elijah; which blew off his mantle, but carried him up to heaven; so death to a child of God is like a bolsterous whirlwind, which blows off the mantle of his flesh, (for the body is but the mantle the soul is wrapped in) but it carries up the soul to God; this is the glorious privilege of the sons of God; every thing that falls out shall do them good; the children of God, when they come to heaven, as Chrysostom speaks, shall bless God for all cross providences.

12. *Privil.* And lastly, If we are children we shall never finally perish, John v. 24. John x. 28. Those who are adopted, are out of the power of damnation, Rom. viii. 1. 'There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ.' Will a father condemn his own son? God will never disinherit any of his children; fathers may disinherit for some fault: Reuben for incest lost the prerogative of his birthright, Gen. xlix. 4. What is the reason parents disinherit their children? surely this, because they can make them no better, they cannot make them fit for the



inheritance; but when we are bad, our heavenly Father knows how to make us better; he can make us fit to inherit, Col. i. 12. 'Giving thanks to the Father, who hath made us meet for the inheritance.' Therefore it being in his power to make us better, and to work in us an idoneity and meetness for the inheritance, certainly he will never finally disinherit.

Because this is so sweet a privilege, and the life of a Christian's comfort lies in it, therefore I shall clear it by arguments, that the children of God cannot finally perish; the entail of hell and damnation is cut off; not but that the best of God's children have that guilt which deserves hell; but Christ is the friend at court which hath begged their pardon; therefore the damning power of sin is taken away, which I prove thus.

*Arg. 1.* The children of God cannot finally perish, because God's justice is satisfied for their sins; the blood of Christ is the price paid, not only meritoriously, but efficaciously, for all them that believe; this being the blood of God, justice is fully satisfied, and meddles not to condemn those for whom this blood was shed, and to whom it is applied. Jesus Christ was a sponsor, he stood bound for every child of God as a surety; he said to justice, 'Have patience with them, and I will pay thee all;' so that the believer cannot be liable to wrath. God will not require the debt twice, both of the Surety and the debtor, Rom. iii. 24, 25, 26. God is not only merciful in pardoning his children, but righteous: 1 John i. 9. 'He is just to forgive;' it is an act of God's equity and justice to spare the sinner, when he hath been satisfied in the surety.

*Arg. 2.* A damnatory sentence cannot pass upon the children of God, because they are so God's children, as withal they are Christ's spouse, Cant. iv. 11. There is a marriage union between Christ

and the saints ; every child of God is a part of Christ, he is Christ mystical. Now, shall a member of Christ perish? A child of God cannot perish but Christ must perish. Jesus Christ, who is the husband, is the judge, and will he condemn his own spouse?

*Arg. 3.* Every child of God is transformed into the likeness of Christ ; he hath the same Spirit, the same judgment, the same will, he is a lively picture of Christ ; as Christ bears the saints' names upon his breast, so they bear his image upon their hearts. Gal. iv. 19. Will Christ suffer his own image to be destroyed? Theodosius counted them traitors who defaced his image ; Christ will not let his image in believers be defaced and rent ; he will not endure to see his own picture take fire ; the sea hath not only stinking carion, but jewels thrown into it ; but none of God's jewels shall ever be thrown into the dead sea of hell.

*Arg. 4.* If God's children could be capable of final perishing, then pardon of sin were no privilege ; the scripture saith, ' Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven,' Psal. xxxii. 1. But what blessedness were there in having sin forgiven, if afterwards a final and damnatory sentence should pass upon the heirs of promise? what were a man the better for the king's pardon, if he were condemned after he were pardoned?

*Arg. 5.* If the children of God should be finally disinherited, then the scripture could not be fulfilled, which tells us of glorious rewards, Psal. lviii. 11. ' Doubtless there is a reward for the righteous.' God sweetens his commands with promises, he ties duty and reward together. As in the body the veins carry the blood, and the arteries carry the spirits, so one part of the word carries duty in it, and another part of the word carries reward ; now if the adopted of God should eternally miscarry, what re-

ward were there for the righteous? and Moses did indiscreetly in looking to the recompense of reward, Heb. xi. 26. and so by consequence there would be a door opened to despair,

By all which it appears that the children of God cannot be disinherited or reprobated; if they should lose happiness, Christ should lose his purchase, and should die in vain.

Thus we have seen the glorious privileges of the children of God. What an encouragement is here to religion? how may this tempt men to turn godly? Can the world vie with a child of God? Can the world give such privileges as these? as Saul said, 1 Sam. xxii. 7. 'Will the son of Jesse give every one of you fields and vineyards, and make you all captains of thousands?' Can the world do that for you, as God doth for his children? Can it give you pardon of sin, or eternal life? 'Are not the gleanings of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abiezer?' Is not godliness gain? what is there in sin that men should love it? the work of sin is drudgery, and the wages death. They who see more in sin than in the privileges of adoption, let them go on, and have their ears bored to the devil's service.

## CHAP. XX.

*Containing several uses drawn from the Proposition.*

*Use 1.* **H**ERE is a bill of indictment against those *Repr.* who declare to the world they are not the children of God; all profane persons; these have damnation written upon their forehead.

1. Scoffers at religion; it were blasphemy to call these the children of God; will a true child jeer at his father's picture?

2. Drunkards, who drown reason, and stupify conscience; these declare their sin as Sodom, they

are children indeed, but cursed children, 2 Pet. ii. 14.

*Use 2. Exhortation*; which consists of two branches.

*Exhort.* 1. Let us prove ourselves to be the children of God.

2. Let us carry ourselves as the children of God.

*Branch.* 1. Let us prove ourselves to be the children of God; there are many false and unscriptural evidences.

1. Saith one, the gravest divines in the country think me to be godly, and can they be mistaken? are the seers blind?

*Ans.* Others can but see thy outward carriage and deportment; if that be fair, they by the rule of charity judge well of thee; but what saith God and conscience? are these thy compurgators? art thou a saint in God's kalender? It is a poor thing to have an applauding world, and an accusing conscience.

2. Oh, but saith another, I hope I am a child of God, I love my heavenly Father.

*Ans.* Why dost thou love God? perhaps because God gives thee corn and wine; this is a mercenary love, a love to thyself more than to God; you may lead a sheep all the field over with a bottle of hay in your hand; but throw away the hay, now the sheep will follow you no longer: so the squint-eyed hypocrite loves God only for the provender; when this fails, his affection fails too.

But leaving these vain and false evidences of adoption, let us inquire for a sound evidence; the main evidence of adoption is sanctification: search, O Christian, whether the work of sanctification hath passed upon thy soul: is thy understanding sanctified to discern the things which are excellent? is thy will sanctified to embrace heavenly objects? dost thou love where God loveth and hate where God hateth? art thou a consecrated person? this argues

the heart of a child: God will never reject those who have his image and superscription upon them.

*Branch. 2.* Let us carry ourselves as becomes the children of God; and let us deport ourselves as the children of the high God.

1. In obedience; 1 Pet. i. 14. 'As obedient children.' If a stranger bid a child do a thing, he regards him not; but if his father command, he presently obeys: obey God out of love, obey him readily, obey every command. If he bid thee part with thy bosom-sin, leave and loathe it; Jer. xxxv. 5. 'I set before the sons of the house of the Rechabites pots full of wine, and cups, and I said unto them, drink ye wine; but they said, we will drink no wine; for Jonadab the son of Rechab, our father, commanded us, saying, ye shall drink no wine, neither ye, nor your sons for ever.' Thus when Satan and thy own heart would be tempting thee to a sin, and set cups of wine before thee, refuse to drink: say, my heavenly Father hath commanded me not to drink. Hypocrites will obey God in some things which are consistent either with their credit or profit, but in other things they desire to be excused; like Esau, who obeyed his father in bringing him venison, because probably he liked the sport of hunting, but refused to obey him, in a business of greater importance: namely, in the choice of his wife.

2. Let us carry ourselves as God's children in humility, 1 Pet. v. 5. 'Be ye clothed with humility,' it is a becoming garment. Let a child of God look his face every morning in the glass of God's word, and see his sinful spots; this will make him walk humbly all the day after; God cannot endure to see his children grow proud; he suffers them to fall into sin, as he did Peter, that their plumes may fall, and they may learn to go on lower ground.

3. Let us walk as the children of God in sobrie-

ty: 1 Thess. v. 8. 'But let us who are of the day be sober:' God's children must not do as others, they must be sober.

1. In their speeches; not rash, not unseemly, Col. iv. 6. 'Let your speech be seasoned with salt:' Grace must be the salt which seasons our words, and makes them savoury; our words must be solid and weighty, not feathery; God's children must speak the language of Caanan; many pretend to be God's children, but their speech bewrayeth them; their lips do not drop as an honeycomb, but are like the sink, where all the filth of the house is carried out.

2. The children of God must be sober in their opinions; hold nothing but what a sober man would hold; error, as saint Basil saith, is a spiritual intoxication, a kind of phrenzy; if Christ were upon the earth again, he might have patients enough; there are abundance of spiritual lunatics among us which need healing.

3. The children of God must be sober in their attire, 1 Pet. iii. 3. 'Whose adorning, let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, &c.; but let it be the hidden man of the heart.' God's children must not be conformed to the world, Rom. xii. 2. It is not for God's children to do as others, taking up every fashion. What is a naked breast, but a glass in which you may see a vain heart? what is spotting of faces, but learning the black art? God may turn these black spots unto blue; walk soberly.

4. Let us carry ourselves as the children of God in sedulity; we must be diligent in our calling. Religion doth not seal warrants to idleness; it was Hierom's advice to his friend, to be always well employed: 'Six days shalt thou labour;' God sets all his children to work, they must not be like the 'lilies which toil not, neither do they spin!' heaven

indeed is a place of rest, Rev. xiv. 13. 'They rest from their labours;' there the saints shall lay aside all their working tools, and take the harp and viol; but while we are here we must labour in a calling; God will bless our diligence, not our laziness.

5. Let us carry ourselves as the children of God in magnanimity and heroicalness. The saints are high-born, they are of the true blood-royal, born of God, they must do nothing sneakingly or sordidly, they must not fear the faces of men; as that brave-spirited Nehemiah, 'shall such a man as I flee?' Neh. vi. 11. so should a child of God say, Shall I be afraid to do my duty? shall I unworthily comply and prostitute myself to the lusts and humours of men? the children of the Most High should do nothing to stain or dishonour their noble birth. A king's son scorns to do any thing which is below him.

6. Let us carry ourselves as God's children in sanctity, 1 Pet. i. 16. Holiness is the diadem of beauty, in this let us imitate our heavenly Father; a debauched child is a disgrace to his father; there is nothing doth more cast a reflection on our heavenly Father, than the irregular actings of such as profess themselves his children. What, will others say, Are these the children of the Most High? is God their Father? Rom. ii. 24. 'The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles thro' you.' Oh let us do nothing unworthy of our heavenly Father.

7. Let us carry ourselves as the children of God in cheerfulness. It was the speech of Jonadab to Amnon, 'Why art thou, being the king's son, lean?' 2 Sam. xiii. 4. Why do the children of God walk so pensively? are they not heirs of heaven? Perhaps they may meet with hard usage in the world, but let them remember they are the seed-royal, and are of the family of God. Suppose a

man were in a strange land, and should meet there with unkind usage, yet he rejoiceth that he is son and heir, and hath a great estate in his own country: so should the children of God comfort themselves with this, though they are now in a strange country, yet they have a title to the Jerusalem above; and though sin doth at present hang about them (for they still have some relics of their disease) yet shortly they shall get rid of it; at death they shall shake off this viper.

8. And lastly, Let us carry ourselves as the children of God, in holy longings and expectations. Children are still longing to be at home; 2 Cor, v. 2. 'We groan earnestly,' &c. 'There is bread enough in our Father's house, how should we long for home! death carries a child of God to his Father's house; saint Paul therefore desired to be dissolved; it is comfortable dying, when by faith we can resign up our souls into our Father's hands, Luke xxiii. 46. 'Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.'



MATT. v. 10. *Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

## CHAP. XXI.

### *Concerning Persecution.*

WE are now come to the last Beatitude, 'Blessed are they which are persecuted,' &c. Our Lord Christ would have us reckon the cost, Luke xiv. 27, 28. 'Which of you intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have enough to finish it?' &c. Religion will cost us the tears of repentance, and



the blood of persecution; but we see here a great encouragement that may keep us from fainting in the day of adversity; for the present Blessed, for the future Crowned.

The words fall into two general parts.

1. The condition of the godly in this life, 'They are persecuted.'

2. Their reward after this life, 'Theirs is the kingdom of heaven.'

I shall speak chiefly of the first, and wind in the other in the applicatory.

*Doct.* The observation is, that true godliness is usually attended with persecution. Acts xiv. 22. 'We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God,' Acts xiii. 50. 'The Jews stirred up the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against Paul,' &c. Luther makes it the very definition of a Christian: though Christ died to take away the curse from us, yet not to take away the cross from us: those stones which are cut out for a building, are first under the saw and hammer to be hewed and squared; the godly are called lively stones, 1 Pet. ii. 5. and they must be hewn and polished by the persecutor's hand, that they may be fit for the heavenly building; the saints have no charter of exemption from trials; though they be ever so meek, merciful, pure in heart, their piety will not shield them from sufferings; they must hang their harp on the willows, and take the cross; the way to heaven, though it be full of roses in regard of the comforts of the Holy Ghost, yet it is full of thorns in regard of persecutions. Before Israel got to Canaan, a land flowing with milk and honey, they must go through a wilderness of serpents, and a Red sea: so the children of God in their passage to the holy land, must meet with fiery serpents, and a Red sea of persecution. It is a saying of Ambrose, there is no Abel but hath his Cain: saint

Paul fought with beasts at Ephesus, 1 Cor. xv. 32. Set it down as a maxim, if you will follow Christ, you must see the swords and staves; put the cross in your creed. For the amplification of this, there are several things we are to take cognizance of.

1. What is meant by persecution.
2. The several kinds of persecution.
3. Why there must be persecution.
4. The chief persecutions are raised against the ministers of Christ.
5. What that persecution is which makes a man blessed.

### SECT. 1.

*Shewing what is meant by persecution.*

1. What is meant by persecution; the Greek word for persecute, signifies to vex and molest, sometimes to persecute another, to arraign him at the bar, and to pursue him to the death; a persecutor is a pricking briar, therefore the church is described to be a 'lily among thorns,' Cant. ii. 2.

### SECT. 2.

*Setting forth the several kinds of persecution.*

2. What are the several kinds of persecution?  
There is a twofold persecution.

1. A persecution of the hand. 2. A persecution of the tongue.

1. A persecution of the hand, Acts vii. 52. 'Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted?' Rom. viii. 36. 'For thy sake are we killed all the day long,' Gal. iv. 29. This I call a bloody persecution, when the people of God are prosecuted with fire and sword: so we read of the

ten persecutions in the time of Nero, Domitian, Trajan, &c. And the Marian persecution; England for five years drank a cup of blood; and lately Piedmont, and the confines of Bohemia have been scourged to death with the rod of the persecutor; God's church hath always, like Abraham's ram, been tied in a bush of thorns.

2. The persecution of the tongue which is twofold.

1. Reviling; this few think of, or lay to heart; but it is called in the text persecution; 'when men shall revile and persecute you;' this is tongue-persecution, Psalm lv. 21. 'His words were drawn swords.' You may kill a man as well in his name as in his person; a good name is as precious ointment, Eccl. vii. 21. A good conscience and a good name, is like a gold ring set with a rich diamond. Now to smite another in his name, is by our Saviour called persecution: thus the primitive Christians endured the persecution of the tongue, Heb. xi. 36. 'They had trial of cruel mockings.' David was the song of the drunkards, Psal. lxxix. 12. They would sit on their ale-bench and jeer at him; how frequently do the wicked cast out the squibs of reproach at God's children, these are the holy ones! little do they think what they do; they are now doing Cain's work and Julian's: they are persecuting.

2. Slandering; so it is in the text, 'When they shall persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely.' Slandering is tongue-persecution; thus saint Paul was slandered in his doctrine; it was reported he should preach, 'Men might do evil that good might come of it,' Rom. iii. 8. Thus Christ who did cast out devils, was charged to have a devil, John viii. 48. The primitive Christians were falsely accused of killing their children, and for incest:

Psal. xxxv. 11. 'They laid to my charge things that I knew not.'

Let us take heed of becoming persecutors: some think there is no persecution but fire and sword; yes, there is the persecution of the tongue; there are many of these persecutors now-a-days, who, by a devilish chymistry, can turn gold into dung, the precious names of God's saints into reproach and disgrace. There have been many punished for clipping of coin; of how much sorer punishment shall they be thought worthy, who clip the names of God's people to make them weigh lighter.

SECT. 3.

*Declaring the causes of persecution.*

3. Why there must be persecution?

I answer for two reasons.

1. In regard of God.

1. His Décree. 2. His Design.

1. God's Decree; 1 Thess. iii. 2. 'We are appointed thereunto:' Whoever brings the suffering, God sends it; God did bid Shimei curse; Shimei's tongue was the arrow, but it was God that did shoot it.

2. God's design; God hath a twofold design in the persecutions of his children.

1. Trial; Dan. xii. 10. 'Many shall be tried:' persecution is the touchstone of sincerity; it discovers true saints from hypocrites; unsound hearts pretend fair in prosperity, but in a time of persecution fall away, Matt. xiii. 20, 21. Hypocrites cannot sail in stormy weather; they will follow Christ to mount Olivet, but not to mount Calvary; like green timber, they shrink in the scorching sun of persecution; if trouble ariseth, hypocrites will rather make Demas' choice, than Moses' choice;

they will prefer thirty pieces of silver before Christ; God will have persecutions in the world to make a discovery of men; suffering times are sifting times: Job xxiii. 10. 'When I am tried, I shall come forth as gold.' Job had a furnace faith; a Christian of the right breed, who is born of God, whatever he loseth, will 'hold fast his integrity,' Job ii. 3. Christ's true disciples will follow him upon the water.

2. Purity; God lets his children be in the furnace, that they may be partakers of his holiness, Heb. xii. 10. The cross is physic, it purgeth out pride, impatience, love of the world; God washeth his people in bloody waters, to get out their spots, and make them look white, Dan. xii. 10. 'I am black, but comely,' Cant. i. 5. The torrid zone of persecution made the spouse's skin black, but her soul fair; see how differently afflictions work upon the wicked and godly; they make the one worse, the other better. Take a cloth that is rotten, if you scour and rub it; it frets and tears; but if you scour a piece of plate, it looks brighter. When afflictions are upon the wicked, they fret against God, and tear themselves in impatience; but when the godly are scoured by these, they look brighter.

2. There will be persecutions in regard of the enemies of the church; these vultures prey upon God's turtles: the church hath two sorts of enemies.

1. Open enemies; the wicked hate the godly; there is enmity between the seed of the woman and the serpent, Gen. iii. 15. As in nature there is an antipathy between the vine and the bay-tree; the elephant and the dragon. Vultures have an antipathy against sweet smells; so in the wicked there is an antipathy against the people of God, they hate the sweet perfumes of their graces; it is true, the

saints have their infirmities; but the wicked do not hate them for these, but for their holiness; and from this hatred ariseth open violence! the thief hates the light, therefore would blow it out.

2. Secret enemies; who pretend friendship, but secretly raise persecutions against the godly; such are hypocrites and heretics. Saint Paul calls them false brethren, 2 Cor. xi. 26. The church complains that her own sons had vexed her, Cant. i. 6. That is, those who had been bred up in her bosom, and pretended religion and sympathy, these false friends vexed her; the church's enemies 'are them of her own house;' such as are open pretenders, but secret opposers of the faith, are even worst. A wen seems to be a part of the body, but is indeed an enemy to it, it doth disfigure and endanger it; they are the vilest and basest of men, who hang forth Christ's colours, yet fight against him.

#### SECT. 4.

*Shewing that the keenest edge of persecution is turned against the ministers.*

4. The fourth particular is, that the chief persecutions are raised against the ministers; our Lord Christ turns himself directly to the apostles, whom he was ready to commissionate, and send abroad to preach; 'Blessed are ye when men shall persecute you,' v. 11. 'so persecuted they the prophets before you,' ver. 12. 'Take my brethren the prophets for an example of suffering affliction,' James v. 10. No sooner is any man a minister, but he is a piece of a martyr. The ministers of Christ are his chosen vessels; now as the best vessel of gold and silver passeth through the fire, so God's chosen vessels pass often through the fire of persecution: all times are not like the silver age wherein Constantine lived: he was

an honourer of the ministry; he would not sit down in the council of Nice, till the bishops who were convened there, did come and beseech him; he would say, if he saw an infirmity in the clergy, he would cover it with his own purple robe. Ministers must not always look for such shines of the prince's favour, they must expect an alarum. Peter, a famous preacher, who knew how 'to cast the net on the right side of the ship;' at one sermon he converted three thousand souls; yet neither the divinity of his doctrine, nor the sanctity of his life could exempt him from persecution, John xxi. 18. 'When thou shalt be old, another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not;' it alludes to his suffering death for Christ; he was, saith Eusebius, bound with chains, and afterwards crucified at Jerusalem with his head downwards. Saint Paul, a holy man, who was steeled with courage, fired with zeal, as soon as he entered into the ministry, 'bonds and persecutions did abide him,' Acts ix. 15, 16. He was made up of sufferings, 2 Tim. iv. 6. 'I am ready to be offered up;' he alludes to the drink-offerings, wherein the wine or blood used in sacrifice was poured out, thereby intimating by what manner of death he should glorify God; not by being sacrificed in the fire, but by pouring out his blood, which was when he was beheaded; and that it might seem no strange thing for God's ministers to be under the heat and rage of persecution, Stephen puts the question, Acts vii. 52. 'Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted?' Ignatius was torn with wild beasts; Cyprian, Polycarp martyred: Maximinus the emperor, as Eusebius relates, gave charge to his officers to put none to death, but the governors and pastors of the church.

The reasons why the storm of persecution hath chiefly fallen upon the ministers, are:

1. They have their corruptions as well as others, and lest they should be lifted up through the abundance of revelation, God lets loose some messenger of Satan to vex and persecute them. God sees they have need of the flail to thrash off their husks; the fire God puts them into, is not to consume, but refine them.

2. The ministers are Christ's ensign-bearers to carry his colours; they are the captains of the Lord's host, therefore are most shot at, Phil. i. 17. 'I am set for the defence of the gospel.' In the Greek it alludes to a soldier that is set in the front of the battle, and hath all the bullets flying about his ears. The ministers' work is to preach against men's sins, which are as dear to them as their right eye, and they cannot endure this. Every man's sin is his king, to which he yields love and subjection; now as Pilate said, 'Shall I crucify your king?' men will not endure to have their king-sin crucified; this therefore being the work of the ministry to divide between men and their lusts, to part these two old friends, no wonder it meets with so much opposition. When Paul preached against Diana, all the city was in an uproar: we preach against men's Dianas, those sins which bring them in pleasure and profit, this causeth an uproar.

3. From the malice of Satan: The ministers of Christ come to destroy his kingdom, therefore the old serpent will spit all his venom at them; if we tread upon the devil's head, he will bite us by the heel; the devil sets up several forts and garrisons in men's hearts, pride, ignorance, unbelief; now the weapons of the ministry beat down these strong holds, 2 Cor. x. 4. Therefore Satan raiseth his militia, all the force and power of hell against the ministry: The kingdom of Satan is a kingdom of darkness, Acts xxvi. 18. Rev. xvi. 10. And God's ministers are called 'the lights of the world;'



**Matt. v. 14.** They come to enlighten those that sit in darkness, this enrageth Satan; therefore he labours to eclipse the lights, to pull down the stars, that his kingdom of darkness may prevail; the devil is called a lion, 1 Pet. v. 8. The souls of the people are the lion's prey, the ministers' work is to take away the prey from this lion; therefore how will he roar upon them, and seek to destroy them!

*Use 1.* It shews us what a work the ministry is; though full of dignity, yet full of danger; the persecution of the tongue is the most gentle persecution can be expected; it is not possible, saith Luther, to be a faithful preacher, and not meet with trials and oppositions.

*Use 2.* It shews the corruption of men's nature since the fall, they are their own enemies, they persecute those who come to do them most good. What is the work of the ministry but to save men's souls; to 'pull them as brands out of the fire;' yet they are angry at this. We hate not the physician who brings such physic as makes us sick, because it is to make us well; nor the chirurgeon, who lanceth the flesh, because it is in order to a cure; why then should we quarrel with the minister? what is our work but to bring men to heaven? 2 Cor. v. 20. 'We are ambassadors for Christ,' &c. we would have a peace made up between you and God; yet this is the folly of depraved nature, to requite evil for good. Aristoxenus did use to moisten his flowers with wine, honey, and perfumes, that they might not only smell more fragrantly, but put forth more vigorously: so should we do with our ministers, give them wine and honey, encourage them in their work, that they might act more vigorously; but instead of this, we give them gall and vinegar to drink, we hate and persecute them. Most deal with their ministers as Israel did with Moses; he prayed for them, and wrought mi-

racles for them, yet they were still quarrelling with him, and sometimes ready to take away his life.

*Use 3.* If the fury of the world be against the ministers, then you that fear God had need pray much for them, 2 Thess. iii. 2. 'pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course; and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men.' People should pray for their ministers, that God would give them the wisdom of the serpent, that they may not betray themselves to danger by indiscretion; and the boldness of the lion, that they may not betray the truth by fear.

SECT. 5,

*Shewing what that persecution is which makes one blessed.*

5. The next thing to be explained is, what that suffering persecution is which makes a man blessed.

1. I shall shew what that suffering is which will not make us blessed.

1. That suffering is not reckoned for martyrdom, when we pull a cross upon ourselves, there is little comfort in such suffering. Austin speaks of some in his time that were called Circumcelliones, who out of an itch (rather than zeal) of martyrdom, would run themselves into sufferings; these were accessory to their own death; like Saul, who fell upon his own sword; we are bound by all lawful means to preserve our own lives. Jesus Christ did not suffer till he was called to it; suspect that to be a tentation which bids us cast ourselves down into sufferings: when men through precipitancy and rashness run themselves into trouble, it is a cross of their own making, and not of God's laying upon them.

2. That is not to be accounted martyrdom, when

we suffer for our offences, 1 Pet. iv. 15. 'Let none of you suffer as an evil-doer.' Luke xxiii. 41. 'We indeed suffer justly.' I am not of Cyprian's mind, that the thief on the cross suffered as a martyr; no, he suffered as an evil-doer; Christ indeed took pity on him and saved him; he died a saint, but not a martyr. When men suffer by the hand of a magistrate for their uncleanness, blasphemies, &c. these do not suffer persecution, but execution; they die not as martyrs, but malefactors; they suffer evil, for being evil.

3. That suffering will not make men blessed when they suffer out of sinister respects, to be cried up as the head of a party, or to keep up a faction. The apostle implies that a man may give his body to be burned, yet go to hell, 1 Cor. xiii. 3. Ambitious men may sacrifice their lives to purchase fame; these are the devil's martyrs.

2. What that suffering persecution is which will make us blessed, and shall wear the crown of martyrdom.

*Ans.* 1. When we suffer in a good cause; so it is in the text, 'Blessed are they which suffer for righteousness' sake;' it is the cause that makes a martyr: when we suffer for the truth, and espouse the quarrel of religion, this is to suffer for righteousness' sake, Acts xxviii. 20. 'For the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain.'

2. When we suffer with a good conscience: a man may have a good cause and a bad conscience; he may suffer for righteousness' sake, yet he himself be unrighteous. Saint Paul, as he had a just cause, so he had a pure conscience, Acts xxiii. 1. 'I have lived in all good conscience to this day.' Paul kept a good conscience to his dying day; a good conscience will make a man suffer with comfort, it hath made the saints go as cheerfully to the stake, as if they had been going to a crown; look to it, that

there be no flaw in conscience. A ship that is to sail upon the waters must be preserved from leaking; when Christians are to sail on the waters of persecution, let them take heed there be no leak of guilt in their conscience; he who suffers (though it be in God's own cause) with a bad conscience, suffers two hells; an hell of persecution, and an hell of damnation.

3. When we have a good call, Matth. x. 18. 'When ye shall be brought before kings,' &c. There is no question but a man may so far consult for his safety, that if God by his providence open a door, he may fly in time of persecution, Matt. x. 23. But when he is brought before kings, and the case is such, that either he must suffer, or the truth must suffer; here is a clear call to suffering, and this is reckoned for martyrdom.

4. When we have good ends in our suffering, viz. that we may glorify God, set seal to the truth, shew our love to Christ, Matt. x. 18. 'When ye shall be brought before kings for my sake.' The primitive Christians did burn more in love than in fire; when we look at God in our sufferings, and are willing to make his crown flourish, though it be in our ashes, this is that suffering which carries away the garland of glory.

5. When we suffer as Christians, 1 Pet. iv. 16. 'If any man suffer as a Christian; let him not be ashamed:' to suffer as a Christian, is to suffer with such a spirit as becomes a Christian, which is,

1. When we suffer with patience, James v. 10. 'Take my brethren the prophets for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience.' A Christian must not repine, but say, Shall I not drink the cup of martyrdom which my Father hath given me? There should be such a spirit of meekness in a Christian's suffering, that it should be hard to say which is greater, his persecution or his patience. When

Job had lost all, he kept the breastplate of innocence, and the shield of patience; an impatient martyr is a solecism.

2. To suffer as Christians, is, when we suffer with courage. Courage is a Christian's armour of proof, it steels and animates him. The three children (or rather the three champions) were of brave heroic spirits; they do not say to the king, we ought not to serve thy gods, but we will not, Dan. iii. 18. Neither Nebuchadnezzar's music, nor his furnace could alter their resolution. Tertullian was called an Adamant for his invincible courage: Holy courage makes us (as one of the Fathers saith) have such faces of brass, that we are not ashamed of the cross; this is to suffer as Christians, when we are meek, yet resolute. The more the fire is blown, the more it flames; so it is with a brave-spirited Christian; the more opposition he meets with, the more his zeal and courage flames forth: what a spirit of gallantry was in Luther; who writing to Melancthon, If, saith he, it be not the cause of God we are embarked in, let us desert it; if it be his cause, and will bear us out, why do we not stand to it?

3. To suffer as Christians, is to suffer with cheerfulness. Patience is a bearing the cross, cheerfulness is a taking up the cross. Christ suffered for us cheerfully, his death was a free-will offering, Luke xii. 50. He thirsted to drink of that cup of blood; such must our sufferings be for Christ: cheerfulness perfumes martyrdom, and makes it the sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour to God. Thus Moses suffered cheerfully, Heb. xi. 24, 25. 'Moses, when he was come to years, chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.' Observe,

1. 'When he was come to years;' it was no childish act, it was not in his nonage, but when he was of years of discretion.

2. 'He chose to suffer affliction; suffering was not so much his task as his choice; the cross was not so much imposed, as embraced; this is to suffer as Christians, when we are volunteers, we take up the cross cheerfully, nay, joyfully, Acts. v. 41. 'They departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name:' or as it is more emphatical in the original, they rejoiced that they were so far graced as to be disgraced for the name of Christ. Tertullian saith of the primitive Christians, they took more comfort in their suffering than in their deliverance; and indeed well may a Christian be joyful in suffering, because it is a great favour when God honours a man to be a witness to the truth. Christ's marks in saint Paul's body were prints of glory; the saints have worn their sufferings as ornaments. Ignatius his chains were his jewels; never have any princes been so famous for their victories, as the martyrs for their sufferings.

4. We suffer as Christians, when we suffer and pray, Matt. v. 44. 'Pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you.'

There are two reasons why we should pray for our persecutors.

1. Because our prayers may be a means to convert them. Stephen prayed for his persecutors, Acts vii. 60. 'Lord, lay not this sin to their charge;' and this prayer was effectual to some of their conversions. Austin saith, the church of God was beholden to Stephen's prayer for all that benefit which was reaped by Paul's ministry.

2. We should pray for our persecutors, because they do us good, though against their will; they shall encrease our reward; every reproach shall add to our glory; every injury shall serve to make our crown heavier; as Gregory Nazianzen speaks in one of his orations, Every stone which was thrown

at Stephen, was a precious stone, which enriched him, and made him shine brighter in the kingdom of heaven. Thus I have shewn what that suffering is which makes us blessed, and shall wear the crown of martyrdom.

## SECT. 6.

### *Inferences drawn from the Proposition.*

*Use 1. Inform. Branch 1.* It shews us what the nature of Christianity is, *viz.* sanctity joined with suffering; a true saint carries Christ in his heart, and the cross on his shoulders, 2 Tim. iii. 12. 'All that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution.' Christ and his cross are never parted; it is too much for a Christian to have two heavens, one here, and another hereafter. Christ's kingdom on earth is the kingdom of the cross: what is the meaning of the shield of faith, the helmet of hope, the breast-plate of patience? but to imply that we must encounter with sufferings. It is one of the titles given to the church, Afflicted, Isa. liv. 11. Persecution is the legacy bequeathed by Christ to his people, John xvi. ult. 'In the world ye shall have tribulation.' Christ's spouse is a lily among thorns. Christ's sheep must expect to lose their golden fleece; this the flesh doth not like to hear of; therefore Christ calls persecution the cross, Matth. xvi. 24. because it is cross to flesh and blood; we are all for reigning. Acts i. 7. 'When wilt thou restore the kingdom again to Israel?' but the apostle tells us of suffering before reigning, 2 Tim. ii. 12. 'If we suffer we shall reign with him.' How loath is corrupt flesh to put its neck under Christ's yoke, or stretch itself upon the cross! but religion gives no charter of exemption from suffering; to have two heavens is more than Christ had. Was the

Head crowned with thorns, and do we think to be crowned with roses? 1 Pet. iv. 12. 'Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial.' If we are God's gold, it is not strange to be cast into the fire. Some there are that picture Erasmus half in heaven, and half out: methinks it represents a Christian in this life: in regard of his inward consolation he is half in heaven, in regard of his outward persecution he is half in hell.

*Branch 2.* See hence that persecutions are not signs of God's anger, or fruits of the curse; for 'blessed are they that are persecuted;' if they are blessed who die in the Lord, are they not blessed who die for the Lord? we are very apt to judge them hated and forsaken of God, who are in a suffering condition, Matt. xxvi. 40. 'If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.' The Jews made a question of it, they could hardly believe he was the Son of God when he hung upon the cross: would God let him be reproached and forsaken if he were the Son of God? when the barbarians saw the viper on Paul's hand, they thought he was a great sinner, Acts xxviii. 4. 'No doubt this man is a murderer:' so when we see the people of God afflicted, and the viper of persecution fasten on them, we are apt to say, these are greater sinners than others, and God doth not love them; this is for want of judgment: 'Blessed are they that are persecuted.' Persecutions are pledges of God's love, badges of honour, Heb. xii. 7. In the sharpest trial there is the sweetest comfort; God's fanning his wheat is but to make it purer.

SECT. 7.

*Containing a Sharp Reproof.*

*Use 2. Reproof. Branch 1.* It reproves such as would be thought good Christians, but will not suf-



fer persecution for Christ's sake; their care is not to take up the cross, but to avoid the cross, Matt. xiii. 21. 'When persecution ariseth because of the word, bye and bye he is offended. There are many professors who speak Christ fair, but will suffer nothing for him; these may be compared to the chrystal, which looks like pearl till it comes to the hammering then it breaks: many, when they see the palm-branches and garments spread, cry Hosannah to Christ; but if the swords and staves appear, then they slink away; as king Henry the fourth (then of Navarre) told Beza, who, urging him to engage himself in the protestant religion, said, he would not launch out too far into the deep, but that if a storm should arise, he might retreat back to shore: it is to be feared there are some among us, who, if persecution should come, would rather make Demas his choice, than Moses his choice; and would study rather to keep their skin whole than their conscience pure. Erasmus highly extolled Luther's doctrine; but when the emperor threatened all that should favour Luther's cause, he unworthily deserted it. Hypocrites will sooner renounce their baptism than take up the cross; if ever we would shew ourselves Christians to purpose, we must with Peter, throw ourselves upon the water to come to Christ. He that refuseth to suffer, let him read over that sad scripture, Matt. x. 33. 'Whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I deny before my Father which is in heaven.'

*Branch 2.* It reproves them who are the opposers and persecutors of the saints; how great is their sin? they resist the Holy Ghost, Acts vii. 51, 52. 'Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted?' persecutors offer affront to Christ in heaven, they tread his jewels in the dust, touch the apple of his eye, pierce his sides, Acts ix. 4, 5. 'Saul, Saul, why

persecutest thou me? When the foot was trodden on, the head cried out? as the sin is great, so the punishment shall be proportionable, Rev. xvi. 6. 'They have shed the blood of the saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink, for they are worthy.' Will not Christ avenge those who die in his quarrel? what is the end of persecutors? Dioclesian proclaimed that the Christian churches and temples should be razed down, their Bibles burned; he would not permit any man that was a Christian to hold an office; some of the Christians he cast alive into boiling lead, others had their hands and lips cut off, only they had their eyes left, that they might behold the tragedy of their own miseries, what was the end of this man? he ran mad, and poisoned himself. Felix, captain to the emperor Charles the fifth, being at supper at Augsburg, vowed he would ride up to the spurs in the blood of the Lutherans; a flux of blood came up that night into his throat, wherewith he was choked; it were easy to tell how God's hand hath so visibly gone out against persecutors, that they might read their sin in their punishment.

### SECT. 8.

*That Christians should possess themselves before-hand with Thoughts of suffering.*

*Use 3. Exhort.* 1. Let it exhort Christians to think before hand, and make account of sufferings; this reckoning before hand can do us no hurt, it may do us much good.

1. The fore-thoughts of suffering will make a Christian very serious; the heart is apt to be feathery and frothy, the thoughts of suffering persecution would consolidate it; why am I thus light? is this a posture fit for persecution? Christians grow

serious in the casting up their spiritual account they reckon what religion must cost them, and may cost them; it must cost them the blood of their sins, it may cost them the blood of their lives.

2. The fore-thoughts of persecution will be as sauce to season our delights, that we do not surfeit upon them. How soon may there be an alarm sounded? how soon may the clouds drop blood? the thoughts of this would take off the heart from the immoderate love of the creature. Our Saviour at a great feast breaks out into mention of his death, Mark xiv. 3. 'She hath prepared this against my burial;' So the fore-thoughts of a change would be an excellent antidote against a surfeit.

2. The fore thoughts of sufferings would make them lighter when they come; the suddenness of an evil adds to the sadness; this was ill news to the fool in the gospel (who reckoned without his host) 'This night shall thy soul be required of thee.' This will be an aggravation of Babylon's miseries, Rev. xviii. 8. 'Her plagues shall come in one day;' not that antichrist shall be destroyed in a day, but (in a day) that is, suddenly; the blow shall come unawares, when he doth not think of it; the reckoning before hand of suffering doth alleviate and take off the edge of it when it comes; therefore Christ, to lighten the cross, still forewarns his disciples before hand, that they might not come unlooked for, John xvi. 33. Acts i. 7.

4. Forethoughts of persecution would put us in mind of getting our armour ready; it is dangerous as well as imprudent, to have all to seek when the trial comes; as if a soldier should have his weapons to get when the enemy is in the field. Cæsar seeing a soldier whetting his sword when he was just going to fight, cashiered him; he that reckons upon persecution, will be in a ready posture for it; he will

have the shield of faith, and the sword of the Spirit ready; that he may not be surprized unawares.

2. Let us prepare for persecution; a wise Pilot in a calm will prepare for a storm. God knows how soon persecution may come, there seems to be a cloud of blood hanging over the nation.

SECT. 9.

*Shewing how we may be Armed for sufferings.*

*Quest.* How shall we prepare for sufferings?

*Ans.* Do three things.

1. Be persons rightly qualified for suffering.  
2. Avoid those things which will hinder suffering.

3. Promote all helps to suffering.

1. Labour to be persons rightly qualified for suffering; be righteous persons; that man who would suffer for righteousness' sake, must himself be righteous; I mean evangelically righteous; in particular I call him righteous,

1. Who breathes after sanctity, Psal. cxix. 5. Though sin cleaves to his heart, yet his heart doth not cleave to sin; though sin hath an alliance, yet no allowance, Rom. vii. 15. 'What I do I allow not:' a good man hates that sin to which Satan doth most tempt, and his heart most incline, Psal. cxix. 128.

2. A righteous person is one who makes God's glory his centre; the glory of God is more worth than the salvation of all men's souls. He who is divinely qualified, is so zealously ambitious of God's glory, that he cares not what he loseth, so God may be a gainer; he prefers the glory of God before credit, estate, relations. It was the speech of Kiliaz, that blessed martyr, Had I all the gold in the world to dispose of, I would give it to live with

my relations (though in prison) yet Jesus Christ is dearer to me than all.

3. A righteous person is one who values the jewel of a good conscience at an high rate ; a good conscience is a saint's festival, his music, his paradise, and he will rather hazard any thing than violate his conscience. They say of the Irish, if they have a good scimeter (a warlike weapon) they had rather take a blow on the arm, than their scimeter should be hurt. To this I may compare a good conscience; a godly man had rather sustain hurt in his body or estate, than his conscience should be hurt; he had rather die than violate the virginity of his conscience; such a man as this, is evangelically righteous; and if God call him to it, he is fit to suffer.

2. Avoid those things which will hinder suffering.

1. The love of the world; God allows us the use of the world, 1 Tim. vi. 7. But take heed of the love of it; he that is in love with the world will be out of love with the cross, 2 Tim. iv. 10. 'Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world;' he not only forsook Paul's company, but his doctrine. The love of the world chokes our zeal; a man wedded to the world will, for thirty pieces of silver, betray Christ and a good cause. Let the world be as a loose garment, that you may throw off at pleasure; before a man can die for Christ, he must be dead to the world. Paul was crucified to the world, Gal. vi. 14. It will be an easy thing to die, when we are dead before in our affections.

2. Carnal fear. There is a twofold fear.

1. A filial fear; when a man fears to displease God; when he fears lest he should not hold out, this is a good fear; 'Blessed is he that fears alway;' if Peter had feared his own heart, and said, Lord Jesus, I fear I shall forsake thee, Lord strengthen

me, doubtless Christ would have kept him from falling.

2. There is a cowardly fear; when a man fears danger more than sin; when he is afraid to be good, this fear is an enemy to suffering. God proclaimed that those who were fearful should not go to the wars, Deut. xx. 8. The fearful are unfit to fight in Christ's wars; a man possessed with fear, doth not consult what is best, but what is safest. If he may save his estate, he will snare his conscience, Prov. xxix. 25. 'In the fear of man there is a snare.' Fear made Peter deny Christ; Abraham equivocate, David feign himself mad; fear will put men upon indirect courses, making them study rather compliance than conscience. Fear makes sin appear little, and suffering great, the fearful man sees double, he looks upon the cross through his perspective twice as big as it is; fear argues sordidness of spirit, it will put one upon things most ignoble and unworthy; a fearful man will vote against his conscience; fear infeebls, it is like the cutting off Samson's locks; fear melts away the courage, Josh. v. 1. 'Their hearts melt because of you;' and when a man's strength is gone, he is very unfit to carry Christ's cross; fear is the root of apostasy. Spira's fear made him abjure and recant his religion; fear doth one more hurt than the adversary; it is not so much an enemy without the castle, as a traitor within indangers it; it is not so much sufferings without, as traitorous fear within which undoes a man; a fearful man is versed in no posture so much as in retreating; oh take heed of this, be afraid of this fear, Luke xii. 4. 'Fear not them that can kill the body.' Persecutors can but kill that body which must shortly die; the fearful are set in the fore-front of them that shall go to hell, Rev. xxi. 8. Let us get the fear of God into our hearts;

as one wedge drives out another, so the fear of God will drive out all other base fear.

3. Take heed of a facile spirit; a facile-spirited man will be turned any way with a word? he will be wrought as wax; he is so tame, that you may lead him whither you will, Rom. xvi. 18. 'With fair speeches they deceive the hearts of the simple.' A facile Christian is malleable to any thing, he is like wool that will take any dye; he is a weak reed that will be blown any way with the breath of men; one day you may persuade him to engage in a good cause, the next day to desert it; he is not *ex quercu sed ex salice*; he is made of willow, he will bend every way: Oh take heed of a facile spirit! it is not ingenuity, but folly to suffer one's self to be abused. A good Christian is like mount Sion, that cannot be moved, Psal. cxxv. 1. He is like Fabricius, of whom it was said, a man might as well alter the course of the sun, as turn him aside from doing justice. A good Christian must be firm to his resolution; if he be not a fixed, he will be a falling star.

4. Take heed of listening to the voice of the flesh. St. Paul 'conferred not with flesh and blood,' Gal. ii. 16. The flesh will give bad counsel; first Saul consulted with the flesh, and afterwards he consulted with the devil, he sends to the witch of Endor; oh, saith the flesh, the cross of Christ is heavy, there is a nail in the yoke which will tear, and fetch blood; be as a deaf adder, stopping your ears to the charmings of the flesh.

3. Promote those things which will help to suffer.

1. Inure yourselves to suffering: 2 Tim. ii. 3. 'As a good soldier endure hardship.' Jacob made 'the stone his pillow.' Gen. xxviii. 18. 'It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth,' Lam. iii. 27. The bearing of a lighter cross will fit for

bearing an heavier: learn to bear a reproach with patience, and then you will be fitter to bear an iron chain. Saint Paul did die daily; he began with lesser sufferings, and so by degrees learned to be a martyr; as it is in sin, a wicked man learns to be expert in sin by degrees; first he commits a lesser sin, then a greater, then he arrives at custom in sin, then he grows impudent in sin, then he glories in sin, Phil. iii. 19. so it is in suffering, first a Christian takes up the chips of the cross, a disgrace, a prison, and then he carries the cross itself.

Alas how far are they from suffering, who indulge the flesh! Amos vi. 4. 'That lie upon beds, of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches,' a very unfit posture for suffering. That soldier is like to make but poor work of it, who is stretching himself upon his bed, when he should be in the field exercising his arms: What shall I say, saith Hierom, to those Christians, who make it all their care to perfume their clothes, to crisp their hair, to sparkle their diamonds; but if sufferings come, and the way to heaven hath any water in it, they will not endure to set their feet upon it! Most people are too effeminate, they use themselves too nicely and tenderly; those silken Christians, (as Tertullian calls them) that pamper the flesh, are unfit for the school of the cross; the naked breast and bare shoulder is too weak to carry Christ's cross; inure yourselves to hardship, do not make your pillow too easy.

2. Be well skilled in the knowledge of Christ; a man can never die for him he doth not know, 2 Tim. ii. 12. 'For which cause I suffer these things, for I know whom I have believed.' Blind men are always fearful; a blind Christian will be fearful of the cross; enrich yourselves with knowledge; know Christ in his virtues, offices, privileges; see the preciousness in Christ, 1 Pet. i. 7. 'To you that



believe he is precious; it is as wine poured forth; Jesus Christ is made up of all sweets and delights, he is light to the eye, honey to the taste, joy to the heart; get but the knowledge of Christ, and you will part with all for him; you will embrace him, though it be in the fire; an ignorant man can never be a martyr; he may set up an altar, but he will never die for an unknown God.

3. Prize every truth of God; the filings of gold are precious, the least ray of truth is glorious, Prov. xxiii. 23. 'Buy the truth and sell it not.' Truth is the object of faith, 2 Thess. ii. 23. The seed of regeneration, James i. 16. The spring of joy, 1 Cor. xiii. 6. Truth crowns us with salvation, 1 Tim. ii. 4. If ever you would suffer for the truth, prize it above all things; he that doth not prize truth above life, will never lay down his life for the truth. The blessed martyrs sealed the truth with their blood. There are two things God counts most dear to him, his glory and his truth. I will, saith bishop Jewel, deny my bishoprick, I will deny my name and credit, but the truths of Christ I cannot deny.

4. Keep a good conscience; if there be any sin allowed in the soul, it will unfit for suffering: a man that hath a boil upon his shoulders, cannot carry a heavy burden: guilt of conscience is like a boil; he that hath this, can never carry the cross of Christ; if a ship be sound, and well rigged, it will sail upon the water; but if it be full of holes and leaks, it will sink in the water; if conscience be full of guilt (which is like a leak in the ship) it will not sail in the bloody waters of persecution. An house will not stand in a storm, the pillars of it being rotten: if a man's heart be rotten, he will never stand in a storm of tribulation; how can a guilty person suffer, when, for ought he knows, he is like to go from the fire at the stake, to hell-fire?

Let conscience be pure, 1 Tim. iii. 9. 'Holding the mystery of faith in a pure conscience.' A good conscience will abide the fiery trial; this made the martyrs' flames beds of roses; a good conscience is a wall of brass; with the leviathan, 'it laughs at the shaking of a spear,' Job xli. 29. Let one be in prison, a good conscience is a bird can sing in this cage; Austin calls it the paradise of a good conscience.

5. Make the scripture familiar to you, Psal. cxix. 50. The scripture well digested by meditation will fit for suffering; the scripture is a Christian's paladium, his magazine and fort-royal; it may be compared to the tower of David, 'on which there hang a thousand bucklers,' Cant. iv. 3. From these breasts of scripture divine strength flows into the soul, Col. iii. 16. 'Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.' Hierom speaks of one who, by frequent studying the scripture, made his breast the library of Christ. The blessed scripture, as it is an honey-comb for comfort, so an armory for strength; first the martyrs' hearts did burn within them by reading the scripture, and then their bodies were fit to burn. The scripture arms a Christian both against temptation and persecution.

1. Against temptation. Christ himself, when he was tempted by the devil, ran to scripture for armour, 'it is written.' Three times he wounds the old serpent with this sword, Hierom saith of saint Paul he could never have gone through so many tentations but for his scripture-armour. Christian, art thou tempted? go to Scripture, gather a stone hence to sling in the face of Goliath-temptation; art thou tempted to pride? read that scripture, 1 Pet. v. 5. 'God resisteth the proud;' art thou tempted to lust? read James i. 15. 'when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin, and sin when it is finished bringeth forth death.'

2. Against Persecution. When the flesh draws

back, the Scripture will recruit us, it will put armour upon us, and courage into us, Rev. ii. 10. 'Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer; behold the devil shall cast some of you into prison that ye may be tried, and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.' O saith the Christian, I am afraid to suffer; 'Fear none of those things thou shalt suffer.' But why should I suffer; I love God, and is not this sufficient? nay, but God will try your love; it is 'that ye may be tried.' God's gold is best tried in the furnace. But this persecution is so long. No, it is but for ten days; it may be lasting, but not everlasting: What are ten days put in the balance with eternity? But what am I the better if I suffer? what comes of it? 'I will (saith God) give thee a crown of life.' Though thy body may be martyr'd, thy soul shall be crowned. But I shall faint when trials come, 'My grace shall be sufficient,' 2 Cor. xii. 9. The weak Christian hath Omnipotency to under-prop him,

5. Get a suffering frame of heart.

Quest. What is that?

Answ. A self denying frame: Matth. xvi. 24, 'If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up the cross.' Self denial is the foundation of godliness; and if this be not well laid, the whole building will fall. If there be any lust in our souls which we cannot deny, it will turn at length either to scandal or apostacy. Self-denial is the thread which must run along through the whole work of religion; the self-denying Christian will be the suffering Christian; 'let him deny himself, and take up his cross.'

For the further explication of this, I shall do two things:

1. Shew what is meant by this word deny.

2. What is meant by self.

1. What is meant by deny; the Greek word *apar-  
neithai*, to deny, signifies to lay aside, to put off, to  
annihilate one's self. Beza renders it, let him re-  
nounce himself.

2. What is meant by self; Self is taken four  
ways:

1. Worldly self. 2. Relative self.

3. Natural self. 4. Carnal self.

1. A man must deny worldly self; that is his  
estate, Matth. xix. 27. 'Behold we have forsaken  
all, and followed thee.' The gold of Ophir must  
be denied for the pearl of price; Let their money  
perish with them (said that noble Marquis of Vico)  
who esteem all the gold and silver in the world  
worth one hour's communion with Christ.

2. A man must deny RELATIVE SELF, his  
dearest relations, if God calls; if our nearest al-  
liance, father or mother stand in our way, and  
would hinder us from doing our duty, we must  
either leap over them, or tread upon them. Luke xiv.  
26. 'If any man come to me, and hate not father  
and mother, and wife, and children, &c. he cannot  
be my disciple.' Relations must not weigh heavier  
than Christ.

3. A man must deny Natural self; he must be  
willing to become a sacrifice, and make Christ's  
crown flourish, though it be in his ashes. Luke xiv.  
26. Rev. xii. 11. 'They loved not their lives unto  
the death:' Jesus Christ was dearer to them than  
their own heart's blood.

4. A man must deny Carnal self; this I take to  
be the chief sense of the text.

1. He must deny Self-ease; the flesh cries out  
for ease, it is loath to put its neck under Christ's  
yoke, or stretch itself upon the cross; the flesh cries  
out, 'there is a lion in the way,' Prov. xxii. 13.  
We must deny our self-ease; they that lean on the

soft pillow of sloth, will hardly take up the cross, 2 Tim. ii. 3. 'Thou as a good soldier of Christ endure hardness.' We must force a way to heaven through sweat and blood. Cæsar's soldiers did fight with hunger and cold.

2. A man must deny Self-opinion; every man by nature hath an high opinion of himself, he is drunk with spiritual pride; and a proud man is unfit for suffering, he thinks himself too good to suffer. What (saith he) I that am of such a noble descent, such high parts, such repute and credit in the world, shall I suffer? a proud man disdains the cross; oh deny self opinion; how did Christ come to suffer? 'He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death,' Phil. ii. 8. Let the plumes of pride fall.

3. A man must deny Self-confidence; Peter's confidence undid him, Matth. xxvi. 33, 34. 'Tho' all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended; though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee.' How did this man presume upon his own strength, as if he had more grace than all the apostles besides? his denying Christ, was for want of denying himself; oh deny thy own strength; Sampson's strength was in his locks; a Christian's strength lies in Christ; he who trusts to himself, shall be left to himself; he who goes out in his own strength, comes off to his own shame.

4. A man must deny Self-wisdom: we read of 'the wisdom of the flesh,' 2 Cor. i. 12. Self-wisdom is carnal policy; it is wisdom (saith the flesh) to keep out of suffering; it is wisdom not to declare against sin; it is wisdom to find out subtle distinctions to avoid the cross; the wisdom of the flesh is to save the flesh. Indeed there is a Christian prudence to be used; the serpent's eye must be in the dove's head; wisdom and innocency do

well, but it is dangerous to separate them: cursed be that policy which teacheth to avoid duty; this wisdom is not from above, but is devilish, James iii. 17. it is learned from the old serpent; this wisdom will turn to folly at last; it is like a man, who to save his gold, throws himself overboard into the water; so the politician to save his skin, will damn his soul.

5. A man must deny Self-will; saint Gregory calls the will the Commander in chief of all the faculties of the soul; indeed in innocency Adam had rectitude of mind, and conformity of will; the will was like an instrument in tune, it was full of harmony, and did tune sweetly to God's will; but now the will is corrupt, and, like a strong tide, carries us violently to evil; the will hath not only an indisposition to good, but an opposition, Acts vii. 51. 'Ye have always resisted the Holy Ghost;' there is not a greater enemy than the will, it is up in arms against God, 2 Pet. ii. 10. The will loves sin, and hates the cross. Now, If ever we suffer for God, we must cross our own will, the will must be martyred; a Christian must say, 'Not my will, Lord, but thy will be done.'

6. A man must deny Self-reasonings; the fleshly part will be reasoning and disputing against sufferings, Mark ii. 8. 'Why reason ye these things in your hearts?' Such reasonings as these will begin to arise in our hearts.

1. Persecution is bitter.

Answ. Oh but it is blessed! James i. 12. 'Blessed is he that endureth temptation,' &c. The cross is heavy, but the sharper the cross, the brighter the crown.

2. But it is sad to part with estate and relations.

Answ. But Christ is better than all, he is manna to strengthen, he is wine to comfort, he is salvation to crown.

3. But liberty is sweet.

Answ. This restraint makes way for enlargement. Psal. iv. 1. 'Thou hast enlarged me in distress;' when the feet are bound with irons, the heart may be sweetly dilated and enlarged,

Thus should we put to silence those self-reasonings which are apt to arise in the heart against sufferings.

This self-denying frame of heart is very hard; this is 'to pluck out the right eye;' one saith, a man hath not so much to do in overcoming men and devils, as in overcoming himself.

Self is the idol; and how hard is it to sacrifice this idol, and to turn self-seeking into self-denial? but though it be difficult, it is essentially necessary to suffering; a Christian must first lay down self, before he can take up the cross.

Alas, how far are they then from suffering that cannot deny themselves in the least things? in their diet or apparel; who, instead of martyring the flesh, pamper the flesh; instead of taking up the cross, take up their cups; is this self-denial, to let loose the reins to the flesh? it is sure, they who cannot deny themselves, if sufferings come, they will deny Christ. Oh Christians, as ever you would be able to carry Christ's cross, begin to deny yourselves; consider,

1. Whatever you deny for Christ, you shall find again in Christ, Matth. xix. 29. 'Every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for my name's sake, shall receive an hundred fold, and shall inherit everlasting life.' Here is a very saving bargain; is it not gain enough to have ten in the hundred; nay, above an hundred for one.

2. It is but equity that you should deny yourselves for Christ; did not Jesus Christ deny himself for you? he denied his joy, he left his Father's bo-

som, he denied his honour, he endured the shame, Heb. xii. 2. He denied his life, he poured out his blood as a sacrifice upon the altar of the cross, Col. i. 20. Did Christ deny himself for you, and will not you deny yourselves for him?

3. Self-denial is the highest sign of a thorough-paced Christian; hypocrites may have great knowledge, and make large profession, but it is only the true hearted saint that can deny himself for Christ. I have read of an holy man who was once tempted by satan, to whom satan said, why takest thou all this pains? thou watchest and fastest, and abstainest from sin, O man, what dost thou more than I? art thou no drunkard, no adulterer? no more am I: let me tell thee, I never slept: dost thou fast? I never eat; what dost thou more than I? Why saith the good man, I will tell thee satan, I pray; I serve the Lord, nay more than all, I deny myself; nay then, saith satan, thou goest beyond me, for I exalt myself, and so vanished. Self-denial is the best touchstone of sincerity; by this you go beyond hypocrites.

4. To deny yourselves, is but what others have done before you. Moses was a self-denier, he denied the honours and profits of the court, Heb. xi. 25. Abraham denied his own country at God's call, Heb. xi. 8. Marcus Arethusus, who lived in the time of Julian the emperor, endured great torments for religion; if he would but have given an halfpenny towards the rebuilding of the idol's temple, he might have been released; but he would not do it, though the giving of an halfpenny might have saved his life; here was a self-denying saint.

5. There is a time shortly coming, that if you do not deny the world for Christ, the world will deny you and persecute you sharply; the world now denies satisfaction, and ere long it will deny house-room; it will not suffer you so much as to breathe



in it, it will turn you out of possession; and which is worse, not only the world will deny you, but Christ will deny you, Matt. x. 33. 'Whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.'

7. Get suffering graces, these three in particular.

1. Faith. 2. Love. 3. Patience.

1. Suffering grace is faith, Eph. vi. 16. 'Above all taking the shield of faith;' the pretence of faith is one thing, the use of faith another; the hypocrite makes faith a cloak, the martyr makes it a shield; a shield is useful in time of danger, it defends the head, it guards the vitals; such a shield is faith. Faith is a furnace-grace, 1 Pet. i. 7. 'Though it be tried with fire, it is found unto praise and honour.' Faith, like Hercules' club, beats down all oppositions; by faith we resist the devil, 1 Pet. v. 9. 'By faith we resist unto blood,' Heb. xi. 34. Faith is a victorious grace; the believer will make Christ's crown flourish, though it be in his own ashes; an unbeliever is like Reuben, 'unstable as water, he shall not excel,' Gen. xlix. 4. A believer is like Joseph, who, though the archers shot at him, 'his bow abode in strength.' Cast a believer upon the waters of affliction, he can follow Christ upon the waters, and not sink; cast him into the fire, his zeal burns hotter than the flame; cast him into prison, he is enlarged in spirit; Paul and Silas had their prison-songs. Psal. xci. 13. 'Thou shalt tread upon the lion and the adder.' A Christian armed with faith as a coat of mail, can tread upon those persecutions which are fierce as the lion, and sting as the adder; get faith.

*Quest.* But how comes faith to be such armour of proof?

*Ans.* Six manner of ways.

1. Faith unites the soul to Christ, and that blessed head sends forth spirits into members, Phil. iv.

18. 'I can do all things through Christ,' &c. Faith is a grace lives all upon the borrow; as when we want water, we go to the well and fetch it, when we want gold, we go to the mine; so faith goes to Christ, and fetcheth his strength into the soul, whereby it is enabled both to do and suffer; hence it is faith is such a wonder-working grace.

2. Faith works in the heart a contempt of the world; faith gives a true map of the world, Eccl. ii. 11. Faith shews the world in its night dress, having all its jewels pulled off; faith makes the world appear in an eclipse; the believer sees more eclipses than the astronomer; faith shews the soul better things than the world; it gives a sight of Christ and glory, it gives a prospect of heaven; as the mariner in a dark night climbs up to the top of the mast, and cries out, I see a star; so faith climbs up above sense and reason into heaven, and sees Christ, that bright morning star; and the soul having once viewed his superlative excellencies, becomes crucified to the world; oh, saith the Christian, shall not I suffer the loss of all these things; that I may enjoy Jesus Christ!

3. Faith gets strength from the promise; faith lives in a promise; take the fish out of the water and it dies; take faith out of a promise, and it cannot live; the promises are breasts of consolation; the child by sucking the breast gets strength; so doth faith by sucking the breasts of a promise. When a garrison is besieged, and is ready almost to yield to the enemy, auxiliary forces are sent in to relieve it; so when faith begins to be weak, and is ready to faint in the day of battle, then the promises muster their forces together, and all come in for faith's relief, and now it is able to hold out in the fiery trial.

4. Faith gives the soul a right notion of suffering; faith draws the true picture of sufferings; what is

suffering? saith faith; it is but the suffering of the body, that body which must shortly by the course of nature, drop into the dust. Persecution can but take away my life; an ague or fever may do as much; now faith giving the soul a right notion of sufferings, and taking, as it were, a just measure of them, enables a Christian to prostrate his life at the feet of Christ.

5. Faith reconciles providences and promises, as it was in saint Paul's voyage, Providence did seem to be against him, there was a cross wind did arise, called, Euroclydon, Acts xxvii. 14. but God had given him a promise that he would save his life, and the lives of all that sailed with him in the ship, ver. 24. therefore, when the wind blew ever so contrary, Paul believed it would at last blow him to the haven; so when sense saith, here is a cross providence, sufferings come, I shall be undone; then saith faith, 'All things shall work for good to them that love God,' Rom. viii. 28. This providence, though bloody, shall fulfil the promise; affliction shall work for my good, it shall heal my corruption, and save my soul. Thus faith making the wind and tide go together, the wind of a providence with the tide of the promise, enables a Christian to suffer persecution.

6. Faith picks sweetness out of the cross; faith shews the soul God reconciled, and sin pardoned; and then how sweet is every suffering? The Bee gathers the sweetest honey from the bitterest herb, so faith from the sharpest trials gathers the sweetest comforts, faith looks upon suffering as God's love-token: Afflictions, saith Nazianzen, are sharp arrows, but they are shot from the hand of a loving Father; faith can taste honey at the end of the rod, faith fetches joy out of suffering, John xvi. 20. Faith gets an honey-comb in the belly of the lion, it finds a jewel under the cross, and thus you see how faith comes to be such armour of proof; 'above all

taking the shield of faith; a believer having cast his anchor into heaven, cannot sink in the waters of persecution.

2. Suffering grace is love; get hearts fired with love to the Lord Jesus; love is a grace both active and passive.

1. Love is active, it lays a law of constraint upon the soul, 2 Cor. v. 14. 'The love of Christ constrains me;' love is the wing of the soul that sets it a flying, and the weight of the soul that sets it a going; love never thinks it can do enough for Christ; as he who loves the world never thinks he can take pains enough for it; love is never weary, it is not tired, unless with its own slowness.

2. Love is passive, it enables to suffer; a man that loves his friend, will suffer any thing for him rather than he shall be wronged. The Curtii laid down their lives for the Romans, because they loved them; love made our dear Lord suffer for us; *per vulnera viscera*; as the Pelican out of her love to her young ones, when they are bitten with serpents, feeds them with her own blood to recover them again; so when we had been bitten by the old serpent, that Christ might recover us, he did feed us with his own blood. Jacob's love to Rachel made him almost hazard his life for her. 'Many waters cannot quench love,' Cant. viii. 7. No, not the waters of persecution; 'Love is strong as death,' Cant. viii. 6. Death makes its way through the greatest oppositions; so love will make its way to Christ through the prison and the furnace. But all pretend love to Christ? how shall we know that we have such a love to him as will make us suffer?

1. True love is a love of friendship, which is genuine and ingenuous, when we love Christ for himself: there is a mercenary and meritricious love, when we love divine objects for something else. A man may love the queen of truth for the jewel at

her ear, because she brings preferment; a man may love Christ for his head of gold, because he enricheth with glory; but true love is when we love Christ for his loveliness, namely, that infinite and superlative beauty which shines in him; as a man loves sweet wine for itself.

2. True love is a love of desire, when we desire to be united to Christ as the fountain of happiness; love desires union; the soul that loves Christ is ambitious of death, because this dissolution tends to union; death slips one knot and ties another.

3. True love is a love of benevolence; when so far as we are able we endeavour to lift up Christ's name in the world; as the wise men brought him gold and frankincense, Matt. ii. 11. so we bring him our tribute of service, and are willing that he should rise, though it be by our fall. In short, that love which is kindled from heaven, makes us give Christ the pre-eminence of our affection, Cant. viii. 2. 'I would cause thee to drink of spiced wine, and the juice of my pomegranate.' If the spouse hath a cup which is more juicy and spiced, Christ shall drink of that; indeed we can never love Christ too much; we may love gold in the excess, but not Christ; the angels do not love Christ to his worth. Now when love is boiled up to this height it will enable us to suffer; love is strong as death; the martyrs first burned in love, and then in fire.

3. The third suffering grace is patience; patience is a grace made and cut out for suffering; patience is a sweet submission to the will of God, whereby we are content to bear any thing that he is pleased to lay upon us. Patience makes a Christian invincible, it is like the anvil that bears all strokes. We cannot be men without patience; passion doth unman a man, it puts him beside the use of reason; we cannot be martyrs without patience, patience makes us endure, James v. 10. We read, Rev.

xiii. 2. of a beast 'like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and the dragon gave him his power,' &c. This beast is to be understood of the Antichristian power. Antichrist may be compared to a leopard for subtilty and fierceness; 'and on his head was the name of blasphemy,' ver. 1. which agrees with that description of the man of sin, 2 Thess. ii. 4. 'He sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God;' 'and the dragon gave him power,' Rev. xiii. 2. that is the devil; and it 'was given to him to make war with the saints,' ver. 7. Well, how come the saints to bear the heat of this fiery trial? ver. 10. 'Here is the patience of the saints;' patience overcomes by suffering. A Christian without patience, is like a soldier without arms; faith keeps the heart up from sinking, patience keeps the heart down from murmuring; patience is not provoked by injuries, it is sensible, but not peevish; patience looks to the end of sufferings; as the watchman waits for the dawning of the morning, so the patient Christian suffers and waits, till the day of glory begins to dawn upon him; faith saith, God will come; and patience saith, I will stay his leisure; these are those suffering graces which are a Christian's armour of proof.

8. Treasure up suffering promises; the promises are faith's bladders to keep it from sinking, they are the breast-milk a Christian lives on in times of suffering they are honey at the end of the rod; hoard up promises.

1. God hath made promises of direction, that he will give us a spirit of wisdom in that hour, teaching us what to say, Luke xxi. 15. 'I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay, nor resist.' You shall not need study, God will put an answer into your mouth; this many of God's sufferers can set their seal to; the Lord hath on a sudden darted such

words into their mouths, as their enemies could easier censure than contradict.

2. God hath made promises of protection, Acts xviii. 9. 'No man shall set on thee to hurt thee.' How safe was Paul, when he had Omnipotency itself to screen off danger? Luke xxi. 18. 'There shall not an hair of your head perish.' Persecutors are lions, but chained lions.

3. God hath made promises of his special presence with his saints in suffering, Psal. xci. 15. 'I will be with him in trouble.' If we have such a friend to visit us in prison, we shall do well enough; though we change our place, we shall not change our keeper; 'I will be with him.' God will hold our head and heart when we are fainting! what if we have more afflictions than others, if we have more of God's company? God's honour is dear to him; it would not be for his honour to bring his children into sufferings, and leave them there; he will be with them to animate and support them; yea, when new troubles arise, Job v. 19. 'He shall be with thee in six troubles.'

4. The Lord hath made promises of deliverance, Psal. xci. 15. 'I will deliver him, and honour him;' God will open a back-door for his people to escape out of sufferings. 1 Cor. x. 13. 'He will with the temptation make a way to escape.' Thus he did to Peter, Acts xii. 10. Peter's prayers had opened heaven, and God's angel opens the prison; God can either prevent a snare, or break it, Psal. lxxviii. 20. 'To God the Lord belong the issues from death.' He who can strengthen our faith, can break our fetters; the Lord sometimes makes the enemies instruments of breaking those snares which themselves have laid, Esther viii. 8.

5. In case of martyrdom God hath made promises of consolation, John xvi. 22. 'Your sorrow shall be turned into joy;' there is the water turned into

wine, Acts xxiii. 11. 'Be of good cheer, Paul.' In time of persecution God broacheth the wine of consolation; cordials are kept for fainting. 'Stephen saw the heavens opened!' Acts vii. 56. Glover that blessed martyr, cried out at the stake, in an holy rapture, He is come, he is come, meaning the Comforter.

6. Promises of compensation; God will abundantly recompense all our sufferings, 'in this life an hundred-fold,' and in the world to come 'life everlasting,' Matth. xix. 29. This Austin calls the best and greatest usury; our losses for Christ are gainful, Matth. x. 39. 'He that loseth his life for my sake shall find it!' These suffering promises should we treasure up, and by holy meditation suck sweetness and strength out of them.

7. Set before your eyes suffering examples, look upon others as patterns to imitate, James v. 10. 'Take, my brethren, the prophets, for an example of suffering affliction.' Examples have more influence upon us than precepts; the one instruct, the other animate; as they shew elephants the blood of grapes and mulberries to make them fight the better; so the Holy Ghost shews us the blood of saints and martyrs to infuse a spirit of zeal and courage into us: Micaiah was in the prison, Jeremiah in the dungeon, Isaiah was sawn asunder. The primitive Christians though their flesh was boiled, roasted, dismembered, yet like the adamant they remained invincible; such was their zeal and patience in suffering, that their persecutors stood amazed, and were more weary in tormenting, than they were in enduring: John Huss, when he was brought to be burned, they put upon his head a triple crown of paper printed with red devils; which, when he saw, saith he, My Lord Jesus Christ wore a crown of thorns for me, why then shall I not wear this crown, how ignominious soever? Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna,



when he came before the proconsul, he bade him deny Christ, and swear by the emperor; he replied I have served Christ these eighty-six years, and he hath not once hurt me, and shall I deny him now? Sanders, that blessed martyr, said, Welcome the cross of Christ; my Saviour began to me in a bitter cup and shall I not pledge him? You Baynham, you Papists, that look for miracles, I feel no more pain in the fire, than if I were in a bed of down. Another of the martyrs said, The ringing of my chain hath been sweet music in my ears; O what a comforter (saith he) is a good conscience! Another martyr, kissing the stake, said, I shall not lose my life, but change it for a better; instead of coals I shall have pearls! Another, when the chain was fastening to him, said, Blessed be God for this wedding girdle! These suffering examples we should lay up, God is still the same God; he hath as much love in his heart to pity us, and as much strength in his arm to help us; let us think with ourselves what courage the very heathens have shewn in their sufferings; Julius Cæsar was a man of an heroic spirit; when he was foretold of a conspiracy against him in the senate-house, he answered, He had rather die than fear. Mutius Scævola having his hand held over the fire till the flesh fried, and his sinews began to shrink, yet did bear it with an undaunted spirit. Quintus Curtius, reports of Lysimachus, a brave captain, that being adjudged to be cast naked to a lion, when the lion came roaring upon him, Lysimachus wrapped his shirt about his arm, and thrust it into the lion's mouth, and taking hold of his tongue killed the lion. Did nature infuse such a spirit of courage and gallantry into heathens? how should grace much more into Christians? let us be of saint Paul's mind, Acts xx. 24. 'Not counting my life dear, so that I might finish my course with joy.'

8. Let us lay in suffering considerations. A wise Christian is considerative.

1. Consider who we suffer for; it is for Christ, and we cannot suffer for a better friend; there is many a man will suffer shame and death for his lusts; he will suffer disgrace for a drunken lust, he will suffer death for a revengeful lust. Shall others die for their lusts, and shall we not die for Christ? Will a man suffer for that lust which damns him, and shall not we suffer for that Christ which saves us? Oh remember we espouse God's own quarrel and he will not suffer us to be losers; if no man shall 'kindle a fire on God's altar for nought,' Mal. i. 10. then surely no man shall sacrifice himself for God in the fire for nought.

2. It is a great honour to suffer persecution. Ambrose speaking the encomium of his sister, said, *appellabo Martyrem*, I will say this of her, she was a martyr; it is a great honour to be singled out to bear witness to the truth, Acts v. 41. 'They departed from the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name;' it is a title that hath been given to kings, Defenders of the Faith; a martyr is in a special manner, a defender of the faith; kings are defenders of the faith by their swords, martyrs by their blood. Gregory Nazianzen calls Athanasius, the bulwark of truth; it is a credit to appear for God. Martyrs are not only Christ's followers, but his ensign-bearers: the Romans had their Camilli and Fabricii, brave warriors, which graced the field; God calls out none but his champions to fight his battles; we read Abraham called forth his trained soldiers, Gen. xiv. 14. such as were more expert and valiant. What an honour it is to be one of Christ's trained band! the disciples dreamed of a temporal reign, Acts i. 6. Christ tells them, ver. 8. 'Ye shall be witnesses unto me in Jerusalem,' &c. To bear witness by their suf-

ferings to the truth of Christ's divinity and passion, was a greater honour to the disciples, than to have had a temporal reign upon earth; a bloody cross is more honourable than a purple robe; persecution is called the fiery trial, 1 Pet. iv. 12. God hath two fires; one where he puts his gold, and another where he puts his dross; the fire where he puts his dross is hell-fire; the fire where he puts his gold is the fire of persecution; God honours his gold when he puts it into the fire, 1 Pet. i. 7. 1 Pet. iv. 14. 'A Spirit of glory rests upon you.' Persecution, as it is a badge of our order, so an ensign of our glory. What greater honour can be put upon a mortal man, than to stand up in the cause of God? and not only to die in the Lord, but to die for the Lord. Ignatius called his fetters his spiritual pearls; saint Paul gloried more in his iron chain, than if it had been a gold chain, Acts xxviii. 20.

3. Consider what Jesus Christ endured for us; Calvin saith, Christ's whole life was a series of suffering: Christian, what is thy suffering? art thou poor, so was Christ? Matth. viii. 20. 'Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.' Art thou surrounded with enemies? so was Christ, Acts iv. 27. 'Against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, &c. were gathered together.' Do our enemies lay claim to religion? so did his, Matth. xxvii. 6. 'The chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood.' Godly persecutors! Art thou reproached? so was Christ, Matth. xxvii. 29. 'They bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying Hail, King of the Jews!' Art thou slandered? so was Christ, Matth. ix. 34. 'He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils!' Art thou ignominiously used? so was

Christ, Mark xiv. 65. 'Some began to spit upon him.' Art thou betrayed by friends? so was Christ, Luke xxii. 48. 'Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?' Is thy estate sequestered? and do the wicked cast lots for it? so Christ was dealt with, Matth. xxvii. 34. 'They parted his garments, casting lots.' Do we suffer unjustly? so did Christ, his very judge did acquit him, Luke xxiii. 4. 'Then said Pilate to the chief priests, and to the people, I find no fault in this man.' Art thou barbarously dragged and hauled away to suffering? so was Christ, Matth. xxvii. 2. 'When they had bound him, (though he came to loosen them), they led him away.' Dost thou suffer death? so did Christ, Luke xxiii. 33. 'When they were come to Calvary, there they crucified him.' They gave him gall and vinegar to drink; the one decyphering the bitterness, the other the sharpness of his death. Christ underwent not only the blood of the cross, but the curse of the cross, Gal. iii. 13. He had an agony in his soul, Matth. xxvi. 38. 'My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death.' The soul of Christ was overcast with a cloud of God's displeasure; the Greek church, speaking of the sufferings of Christ, calls them unknown sufferings. Did the Lord Jesus endure all this for us, and shall we not suffer persecution for his name? say as holy Ignatius, I am willing to die for Christ, for Christ my love was crucified. Our cup is nothing to the cup which Christ drank; his cup was mixed with the wrath of God; and if he did bear God's wrath for us, well may we bear man's wrath for him.

4. Great is the honour we bring to Christ and the gospel by suffering; it was an honour to Cæsar that he had such soldiers as were able to fight with hunger and cold, and endure hardship in their marches. It is an honour to Christ that he hath such listed under him as will leave all for him; it

proclaims him to be a good master, when his servants will wear his livery, though it be sullied with disgrace, and lined with blood; Paul's iron chain made the gospel wear a golden chain. Tertullian saith of the saints in his time, they took their sufferings more kindly, than if they had had deliverance. O what a glory was this to the truth, when they durst embrace it in the flame! And as the saints' sufferings adorn the gospel, so they propagate it. Basil saith the zeal and constancy of the martyrs in the primitive times, made some of the heathens to be christianized.

The showers of blood have ever made the church fruitful, Phil. i. 13. Paul's being bound, made the truth more enlarged; the gospel hath always flourished in the ashes of martyrs.

5. It is that we have engaged ourselves to in baptism; there we took our press-money; we solemnly vowed that we would be true to Christ's interest, and fight out under his banner to the death: and how often have we in the blessed supper taken the oath of allegiance to Jesus Christ, that we would be his liege-servants, and that death should not part us! Now, if when being called to it we refuse to suffer persecution for his name, Christ will bring our baptism as an indictment against us; Christ is called the Captain of our salvation, Heb. ii. 10. We have listed ourselves by name under this Captain: now, if for fear, we shall fly from our colours, it is perjury in the highest degree; and how shall we be able to look Christ in the face another day? That oath which is not kept inviolably, shall be punished infallibly; where doth the flying roll of curses light, but in the house of him that swear-eth falsely.

6. Our sufferings are light, 2 Cor. iv. 17. 'This light affliction,' &c. It is heavy to flesh and blood,

but it is light to faith ; affliction is light in a three-fold respect.

1. It is light in comparison of sin ; he that feels sin heavy, feels suffering light ; sin made Paul cry out, ‘ O wretched man that I am !’ Rom. vii. He doth not cry out of his iron chain, but of his sin ; the greater noise drowns the lesser ; when the sea roars, the rivers are silent ; he that is taken up about his sins, and sees how he hath provoked God, thinks the yoke of affliction light, Mic. vii. 9.

2. Affliction is light in comparison of hell ; what is persecution to damnation ? what is the fire of martyrdom to the fire of the damned ? it is no more than the pricking of a pin to a death’s wound. ‘ Who knoweth the power of thine anger ?’ Psal. xc. 11. Christ himself could not have borne that anger, had he not been more than a man.

3. Affliction is light in comparison of glory ; the weight of glory makes persecution light ; if, saith Chrysostom, the torments of all the men in the world could be laid upon one man, it were not worth one hour’s being in heaven ; and if persecution be light, we should in a manner set light by it : let us neither faint through unbelief, nor fret through impatience.

7. Our sufferings are short, 1 Pet. v. 10. ‘ After ye have suffered a while ; or as it is in the Greek, a little : our sufferings may be lasting, not everlasting ; affliction is compared to a cup, Lam. iv. 21. The wicked drink of a sea of wrath which hath no bottom, it will never be emptied ; but it is only a cup of martyrdom, and God will say let this cup pass away, Psal. cxxv. 3. ‘ The rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous ;’ the rod may be there, it shall not rest ; Christ calls his sufferings an hour, Luke xxii. 53. Can we not suffer one hour ? Persecution is *aspera*, but *brevis* ; though it hath a sting to tor-

ment, yet it hath a wing to fly, Isa. xxxv. 10. 'Sorrows shall fly away;' it is but a while when the saints shall have a writ of ease granted them, they shall weep no more, suffer no more; they shall be taken off the torturing rack, and laid in Christ's bosom; the people of God shall not always be in the iron furnace, a year of jubilee will come; the water of persecution, like a land-flood, will soon be dried up.

8. While we suffer for Christ, we suffer with Christ, Rom. viii. 17. 'If we suffer with him,' &c. Jesus Christ bears part of the suffering with us; Oh saith the Christian, I shall never be able to hold out; but remember thou sufferest with Christ, he helps thee to suffer. As our blessed Saviour said, John xvi. 32. 'I am not alone, the Father is with me:' so a believer may say, I am not alone, my Christ is with me, he bears the heaviest end of the cross, 2 Cor. xii. 9. 'My grace is sufficient for thee.' Deut. xxxiii. 27. 'Underneath are the everlasting arms;' if Christ put the yoke of persecution over us, he will put his arms under us; the Lord Jesus will not only crown us when we conquer, but he will enable us to conquer; when the dragon fights against the godly, Christ is that Michael which stands up for them, and helps them to overcome. Dan. xii. 1.

9. He that refuseth to suffer persecution, shall never be free from suffering:

1. Internal sufferings; he that will not suffer for conscience, shall suffer in conscience; thus Francis Spira, after he had for fear abjured that doctrine which once he had professed, was in great terror of mind, and became a very anatomy; he professed he felt the very pains of the damned in his soul; he who was afraid of the stake, was set upon the rack of conscience.

2. External sufferings. Pendleton, who refused

to suffer for Christ, not long after, his house was on fire, and he was burned in it; he who would not burn for Christ, was afterwards made to burn for his sins.

3. Eternal sufferings; Jude 7. 'Suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.'

10. These present sufferings cannot hinder a man from being blessed, 'Blessed are they that are persecuted,' &c. We think, blessed are they that are rich, nay, but blessed are they that are persecuted. James i. 12. 'Blessed is the man that endures temptation.' 1 Pet. iii. 14. 'If ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye.'

That persecution cannot hinder us from being blessed, I shall prove by four demonstrations.

1. They are blessed who have God for their God. Psal. cxliv. 13. 'Happy is that people whose God is the Lord;' but persecution cannot hinder us from having God for our God, Dan. iii. 17. 'Our God is able to deliver us;' though persecuted, yet they could say, our God; therefore persecution cannot hinder us from being blessed.

2. They are blessed whom God loves, but persecution cannot hinder the love of God, Rom. viii. 35. 'Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall persecution?' The goldsmith loves his gold as well when it is in the fire, as when it is in his bag; God loves his children as well in adversity as in prosperity, Rev. iii. 19. 'As many as I love I rebuke;' God visits his children in prison, Acts xxiii. 11. 'Be of good cheer, Paul.' God sweetens their sufferings, 2 Cor. i. 5. 'As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth.' As the mother having given her child a bitter pill, gives it afterwards a lump of sugar; persecution is a bitter pill, but God gives the comforts of his Spirit to sweeten it; if persecution cannot hin-



der God's love, then it cannot hinder us from being blessed.

3. They are blessed for whom Christ prays, but such as are persecuted, have Christ praying for them, John xvii. 11. 'Keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me;' which prayer, though made for all believers, yet especially for his apostles, which he foretold should be martyrs, John xvi. 2. Now if persecution cannot hinder Christ's prayer for us, then it cannot impede or obstruct our blessedness.

4. They are blessed that have sin purged out; but persecution purgeth out sin, Isa. xxvii. 9. Heb. xii. 11. Persecution is a corrosive to eat out the proud flesh, it is a fan to winnow us, a fire to refine us: persecution is the physic God applies to his children, to carry away their ill humours; that surely which purgeth out sin, cannot hinder blessedness.

5. The great suffering consideration is the glorious reward which follows sufferings; 'Theirs is the kingdom of heaven;' the hope of reward, saith St. Basil, is very powerful and moving. Moses had an eye to the recompense of reward, Heb. xi. 26. yea, Christ himself, Heb. xii. 2. Many have done great things for hope of a temporal reward; Camillus, when his country was opposed by the Gauls, ventured his life for his country, to purchase fame and honour; if men will hazard their lives for a little temporal honour; what should we do for the reward of glory? A merchant, saith Chrysostom, doth not mind a few storms at sea, but he thinks of the emolument and gain when the ship comes fraught home; so a Christian should not be oversolicitous about his present sufferings, but think of the rich reward when he shall arrive at the heavenly port. 'Great is your reward in heaven,' ver. 12. The cross is a golden ladder by which we climb up

to heaven; a Christian may lose his life, but not his reward; he may lose his head, but not his crown; if he that gives a cup of cold water, shall not lose his reward, then much less he that gives a draught of warm blood; the reward of glory may sweeten all the waters of Marah, it should be a spur to martyrdom.

*Caution.* Not that we can merit this reward by our sufferings, Rev. ii. 10. 'I will give thee a crown of life.' The reward is the legacy which free grace bequeaths. Alas! what proportion is there between a drop of blood, and a weight of glory? Christ himself as he was man only (setting aside his Godhead) did not merit by his sufferings: For 1. Christ as he was man, only was a creature; now a creature cannot merit from the Creator. 2. Christ's sufferings as he was man only, were finite, therefore could not merit infinite glory; indeed as he was God, his sufferings were meritorious; but consider him purely as man, they were not. This I urge against the papists; if Christ's sufferings as he was man only, (though as man, he was above the angels) could not merit; then what man upon earth, what prophet or martyr is able to merit any thing by his sufferings?

But though we have no reward by merit, we shall have it by grace: so it is in the text, 'Great is your reward in heaven.' The thoughts of this reward should animate Christians. Look upon the crown, and faint if you can; the reward is as far above your thoughts, as it is beyond your deserts; a man that is to wade through a deep water, fixeth his eyes upon the firm land before him; while Christians are wading through the deep waters of persecution, they should fix the eyes of their faith on the land of promise; 'Great is your reward in heaven.' They that bear the cross patiently, shall wear the crown triumphantly.

Christ's suffering saints shall have greater degrees in glory, Matt. xix. 28. God hath his highest seats, yea, his thrones for his martyrs; it is true, he that hath the least degree of glory, a doorkeeper in heaven, will have enough; but as Joseph gave to Benjamin a double mess above the rest of his brethren, so God will give to his sufferers a double portion of glory; some orbs in heaven are higher, some stars brighter; God's martyrs shall shine brighter in the heavenly horizon.

Oh often look upon the recompense of reward; not all the silks of Persia, the spices of Arabia, the gold of Ophir, can be compared to this glorious reward: how should the thoughts of this whet and steel us with courage in our sufferings; when they threatened Basil with punishment, he comforted himself with this, that he should be either under heaven, or in heaven. It was the hope of this reward which did so animate those primitive martyrs, who when there was incense put into their hands, and there was no more required of them for the saving of their lives, but to sprinkle a little of that incense on the altar, in honour of the idol, they would rather die than do it; this glorious reward in heaven is called a reigning with Christ, 2 Tim. ii. 12. 'If we suffer we shall reign with him.' First martyrs, then kings. Julian honoured those who were slain in his battles, so doth the Lord Jesus; after the saints' crucifixion follows their coronation, they shall reign. The wicked first reign and then suffer; the godly first suffer and then reign. The saints shall have an happy reign, it shall be both peaceable and durable; who would not swim thro' blood for this crown? who would not suffer joyfully? Christ saith 'be exceeding glad,' ver. 12. The Greek word signifies to leap for joy. Christians should have their spirits elevated and exhilarated, when they contemplate the weight of glory.

11. If you would be able to suffer, pray much ;

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.

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## APPENDIX

TO

### THE BEATITUDES.

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#### 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, penance, 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. 13. '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, despises 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.

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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 biassethe 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.'

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*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.

THE BEATITUDES.



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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