

A
SERMON OF JUDGMENT

PREACHED AT PAUL'S,

BEFORE

**THE HON. LORD MAYOR AND ALDERMEN
OF THE CITY OF LONDON,**

Dec. 17th, 1654.

AND NOW ENLARGED.

“ Every one of you shall give account of himself to God.”—ROM. xiv. 12.

“ The hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth. They that have done good to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation.”—JOHN v. 28, 29.

TO THE
RIGHT HON. CHRISTOPHER PACK,
LORD MAYOR OF LONDON;
WITH THE
RIGHT WORSHIPFUL ALDERMEN.

RIGHT HONOURABLE,

BEING desired to preach before you at Paul's, I was fain to preach a sermon which I had preached once before to a poor ignorant congregation in the country, having little leisure for study in London. I was glad to see that the more curious stomachs of the citizens did not nauseate our plain country doctrine, which I seemed to discern in the diligent attention of the greatest congregation that ever I saw met for such a work. But I little expected that you should have so far esteemed that discourse, as to have thought it meet for the view of the world, as I understood by a message from you, desiring it may be printed. I readily obey your will, when it gives me the least intimation of the will of God. It is possible some others may afford it the like favourable acceptance and entertainment. I am sure the subject is as necessary as common, and the plainness makes it the fitter for the ignorant, who are the far greater number, and have the greatest need. I have added the ninth, tenth, eleventh, and twelfth heads, or common places, which I did not deliver to you for want of time, and because the rest are too briefly touched (as contrived for an hour's work). I have enlarged these, though making them somewhat unsuitable to the rest, yet suitable to the use of those they are now intended for: the directions also in the end are added.

Blessed be the Father of Lights! who hath set up so many burning and shining lights in your city, and hath watered you so plenteously with the rivers of his sanctuary, that you have frequent opportunities for the refreshment of your souls, to the joy of your friends, the grief of your enemies, and the glory of

that Providence which hath hitherto maintained them, in despite of persecution, heresies, and hell ! It was not always so in London : it is not so in other places, or famous cities in the world ; nor are you sure that it will be always so with you. It doth me good to remember what blessed lights have shined among you, that now are more gloriously shining in a higher sphere—Preston, Sibbes, Stoughton, Taylor, Stock, Randal, Gouge, Gataker, with multitudes more that now are with Christ. It did me good to read in the preface to Mr. Gataker's funeral sermon, by one of your reverend and faithful guides, what a number of sound and unanimous labourers are yet close at work in that part of Christ's vineyard : and it did me good in that short experience and observation, while I was there, to hear and see so much of their prudence, unity, and fidelity.

Believe it : it is the gospel of Christ that is your glory ; and if London be more honourable than other great and famous cities of the earth, it is the light of God's face, and the plenty and power of his ordinances and Spirit, that doth advance and honour it. O know, then, the day of your visitation !

Three things I shall take leave to propound to your consideration, which, I am certain, God requireth at your hand. The first is, that you grow in knowledge, humility, heavenliness, and unity, according to the blessed means that you enjoy. In my eyes, it is the greatest shame to a people in the world, and a sign of barbarism or blockishness, when we can hear and read what a famous, learned, powerful minister such a place, or such a place, had, and yet see as much ignorance, ungodliness, unruliness, and sensuality, as if the gospel had scarce ever been there. I hope it is not thus with you, but I have found it so in too many places of England. We who never saw the faces of their ministers, but have only read their holy labours, have been ready to think, ' Sure there are few ignorant or ungodly ones in such a congregation ! Sure they are a people rich in grace and eminently qualified above their brethren, who have lived under such teaching as this ! At least, sure there can be none left who have an enmity to the fear of God ! ' But when we have come to the towns where such men spent their lives, and laid out their labours, we have found ignorant, sottish worldlings, unprofitable, or giddy, unstable professors, and some haters of godliness among them. O what a shame is this in the eyes of wise men ! And what a confounding aggravation of their sin before God ! Thrive, therefore, and be fruitful in

the vineyard of the Lord, that it may not repent him that he hath planted and watered you.

The second is this, improve your interest to the utmost, for the continuance of a faithful ministry among you, and when any places are void, do what you can to get a supply of the most able men. Your city is the heart of the nation; you cannot be sick but we shall all feel it. If you be infected with false doctrines, the countries will, ere long, receive the contagion. You have a very great influence on all the land, for good or evil! And do you think the undermining enemies of the church have not a special design upon you in this point, and will not promote it as far as is in their power? Could they but get in popish or dividing teachers among you, they know how many advantages they should gain at once. They would have some to grieve and trouble your faithful guides, and hinder them in the work, and lessen that estimation which, by their unity, they would obtain: and every deceiver will hope to catch some fish that casteth his net among such store. We beseech you, if there be learned, holy, judicious men in England, that can be had for supply of such occasions, let them be yours, that you may be fed with the best, and guided by the wisest, and we may have all recourse to you for advice; and where there are most opposers and seducers, there may be the most powerful, convincing helps at hand. Let us, in the country, have the honest, raw, young preachers, and see that you have the chief fathers and pillars in the church. I speak it not for your sakes alone, but because we have all dependence on you.

The third thing which I humbly crave is, that you will "know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their works' sake, and be at peace among yourselves." (1 Thes. v. 12, 13.) And that you will, instead of grieving or rejecting your guides, "obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief, for that is unprofitable for you." (Heb. xiii. 17.) Encourage your teachers, for their work is great, their spirits are weak, they are but frail men; the enemy is more industrious against them than any men, and their discouragements are very many, and the difficulties which they must encounter are very great. Especially obey, submit, and encourage them in the work of government and exercise of Christ's discipline, and managing

the keys of the kingdom which he hath put into their hands. Do you not perceive what a strait your teachers are in. The Lord Jesus requireth them to exercise his discipline faithfully and impartially. He giveth them not empty titles of rule, but lays upon them the burden of ruling. It is his work more than their honour that he intends; and if they will have the honour, it must be by the work. The work is, as to teach the ignorant, and convince the unbelieving and gainsaying, so to admonish the disorderly and scandalous, and to reject and cast out of the communion of the church the obstinate and impenitent, and to set by the leprous that they infect not the rest, and to separate thus the precious from the vile by Christ's discipline, that dividing separation and soul-destroying transgressions may be prevented or cured. This work Christ hath charged upon them, and will have it done whoever is against it. If they obey him, and do it, what a tumult, what clamours and discontents will they raise! How many will be ready to rise up against them with hatred and scorn! Though it be the undoubted work of Christ, which, even under persecution, was performed by the church guides. When they do but keep a scandalous, untractable sinner from the communion of the church in the Lord's supper, what repinings doth it raise! But, alas! this is a small part of the discipline. If all the apparently obstinate and impenitent were cast out, what a stir would they make; and if Christ be not obeyed, what a stir will conscience make: and it is not only between Christ and men, but between men and men that your guides are put upon straits. The separatists reproach them for suffering the impenitent to continue members of their churches, and make it the pretence of their separation from them, having little to say of any moment against the authorised way of government, but only against our slackness in the execution; and if we should set to the close exercise of it, as is meet, how would city and country ring of it; and what indignation should we raise in the multitude against us. O what need have your guides of your encouragement and best assistance in this strait! God hath set them on a work so ungrateful and displeasing to flesh and blood that they cannot be faithful in it, but twenty to one they will draw a world of hatred upon themselves, if not men's fists about their ears. Festered sores will not be lanced and searched with ease. Corrupted members are unwilling to be cut off and cast aside, especially if any of the great ones fall under the censure, who are big in

the eyes of the world, and in their own ; and yet our sovereign Lord must be obeyed, and his house must be swept, and the filth cast out, by what names or titles soever it be dignified with men. He must be pleased, if all be displeased by it. Withdraw not your help, then, from this needful work. It is by the word, Spirit, and ministry, that Christ, the King of his church, doth govern it ; not separately, but jointly by all three. To disobey these is to disobey Christ ; and subjection to Christ is essential to our Christianity. This, well thought on, might do much to recover the unruly that are recoverable. You may conjecture by the strange opposition that church government meets with from all sorts of carnal and corrupted minds, that there is somewhat in it that is eminently of God. I shall say no more but this, that it is an able, judicious, godly, faithful ministry ; not barely heard and applauded, but humbly and piously submitted to, and obeyed in the Lord, that must be your truest present glory, and the means of your everlasting peace and joy.

So testifieth from the Lord your servant in the faith of Christ,

RICHARD BAXTER.

TO THE

IGNORANT OR CARELESS READER.

SEEING the Providence of God hath commanded forth this plain discourse, I shall hope, upon experience of his dealing in the like cases with me, that he hath some work for it to do in the world. Who knows but it was intended for the saving of thy soul, by opening thine eyes, and awaking thee from thy sin, who art now in reading of it! Be it known to thee, it is the certain truth of God, and of high concernment to thy soul, that it treateth of, and therefore requireth thy most sober consideration. Thou hast in it, (how weakly soever it is managed by me,) an advantage put into thy hand from God, to help thee in the greatest work in the world, even to prepare for the great approaching judgment. In the name of God, I require thee, cast not away this advantage; turn not away thine ears or heart from this warning that is sent to thee from the living God! Seeing all the world cannot keep thee from judgment, nor save thee in judgment, let not all the world be able to keep thee from a speedy and serious preparation for it. Do it presently, lest God come before thou art ready! Do it seriously, lest the tempter overreach thee, and thou shouldest be found among the foolish self-deceivers when it is too late to do it better. I entreat this of thee on the behalf of thy soul, and as thou tenderest thy everlasting peace with God, that thou wouldest afford these matters thy deepest consideration. Think on them, whether they are not true and weighty: think on them lying down and rising up: and, seeing this small book is fallen into thy hands, all that I would beg of thee concerning it is, that thou wouldest bestow now and then an hour to read it, and read it to thy family or friends, as well as to thyself; and as you go, consider what you read, and pray the Lord to help it to thy heart, and

to assist thee in the practice, that it may not rise up in judgment against thee. If thou hast not leisure on the other, take now and then an hour on the Lord's days, or at night, to that purpose: and if any passage, through brevity, especially near the beginning, seem dark to thee, read it again and again, and ask the help of an instructor, that thou mayest understand it. May it but help thee out of the snares of sin, and promote the saving of thy immortal soul, and thy comfortable appearance at the great day of Christ, I have the thing which I intended and desired. The Lord open thy heart, and accompany his truth with the blessing of his Spirit! Amen.

A
SERMON OF JUDGMENT,

&c. &c.

2 COR. v. 10, 11.

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing, therefore, the terrors of the Lord, we persuade men.

It is not unlikely that some of those wits that are taken more with things new than with things necessary, will marvel that I chose so common a subject, and tell me that they all know this already; but I do it purposely upon these following considerations. 1. Because I well know, that it is these common truths that are the great and necessary things which men's everlasting happiness or misery doth most depend upon. You may be ignorant of many controversies and inferior points, without the danger of your souls, but so you cannot be of these fundamentals. 2. Because it is apparent by the lives of men that few know these common truths savingly, that think they know them. 3. Because there are several degrees of knowing the same truths, and the best are imperfect in degree, the principal growth in knowledge, that we should look after, is, not to know more matters than we knew before, but to know that better, and with a clearer light and firmer apprehension, which we darkly and slightly knew before. You may more safely be without any knowledge at all of many lower truths, than without some further degree of the knowledge of those which you already know. 4. Besides, it is known, by sad experience, that many perish who know the truth, for want of the consideration of it,

and making use of what they know, and so their knowledge doth but condemn them. We have as much need, therefore, to teach and help you to get these truths, which you know, into your hearts and lives, as to tell you more. 5. And, indeed, it is the impression of these great and master truths, wherein the vitals and essentials of God's image upon the soul of man doth consist: and it is these truths that are the very instruments of the great works that are to be done upon the heart by the Spirit and ourselves. In the right use of these it is that the principal part of the skill and holy wisdom of a Christian doth consist; and in the diligent and constant use of these, lieth the life and trade of Christianity. There is nothing amiss in men's hearts or lives, but it is for want of sound knowing and believing, or well using these fundamentals. 6. And moreover, methinks, in this choice of my subject, I may expect this advantage with the hearers, that I may spare that labour that else would be necessary for the proof of my doctrine; and that I may also have easier access to your hearts, and have a fuller stroke at them, and with less resistance. If I came to tell you of any thing not common, I know not how far I might expect belief from you. You might say 'these things are uncertain to us; or all men are not of this mind.' But when every hearer confesseth the truth of my doctrine, and no man can deny it without denying Christianity itself, I hope I may expect that your hearts should the sooner receive the impression of this doctrine, and the sooner yield to the duties which it directs you to, and the easier let go the sins, which, from so certain a truth, shall be discovered.

The words of my text are the reason which the apostle giveth, both of his persuading other men to the fear of God, and his care to approve to God his own heart and life. They contain the assertion and description of the great judgment, and one use which he makes of it. It assureth us, that judged we must be, and who must be so judged, and by whom, and about what, and on what terms, and to what end.

The meaning of the words, so far as is necessary, I shall give you briefly. "We all," both we apostles that preach the gospel, and you that hear it, "must," willing or unwilling, there is no avoiding it, "appear," stand forth, or make your appearance, and there have your hearts and ways laid open, and appear as well as we, "before the judgment seat of Christ;" that is, before

the Redeemer of the world, to be judged by him as our rightful Lord. "That every one," even of all mankind, which are, were, or shall be, without exception, "may receive," that is, may receive his sentence, adjudging him to his due; and then may receive the execution of the sentence, and may go away from the bar with that reward or punishment that is his due, according to the law by which he is judged. "The things done in his body," that is, the due reward of the works done in his body; or, as some copies read it, "the things proper to the body," that is due to man, even body as well as soul. "According to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad," that is, this is the cause to be tried and judged, whether men have done well or ill, whilst they were in the flesh, and what is due to them according to their deeds. "Knowing, therefore, &c., that is, being certain therefore that these things are so, and that such a terrible judgment of Christ will come, we persuade men to become Christians, and live as such, that they may then speed well, when others shall be destroyed; or, as others, "Knowing the fear of the Lord," that is, the true religion, "we persuade men."

Doct. 1. There will be a judgment. Doct. 2. Christ will be the judge. Doct. 3. All men shall there appear. Doct. 4. Men shall be then judged according to the works that they did in the flesh, whether good or evil. Doct. 5. The end of judgment is, that men may receive their final due by sentence and execution. Doct. 6. The knowledge and consideration of the terrible judgment of God, should move us to persuade, and men to be persuaded, to careful preparation.

The ordinary method for the handling of this subject of judgment should be this. 1. To show you what judgment is in the general, and what it doth contain; and that is, 1. The persons. 2. The cause. 3. The actions. 1. The parties are, 1. The accuser. 2. The defendant. 3. Sometimes assistants. 4. The judge. 2. The cause contains, 1. The accusation. 2. The defence. 3. With the evidence of both. 4. And the merit. The merit of the cause is as it agreeth with the law and equity. 3. The judicial actions are, I. Introductory. 1. Citation. 2. Compulsion, if need be. 3. Appearance of the accused. II. Of the essence of judgment, 1. Debate by, 1. The accuser. 2. Defendant, called the disceptation of the cause. 2. By the judge. 1. Exploration. 2. Sentence. 3. To see to the execution; but

because this method is less suitable to your capacities, and hath something human, I will reduce all to these following heads :—

1. I will show you what judgment is.
2. Who is the judge ; and why.
3. Who must be judged.
4. Who is the accuser.
5. How the citation, constraint, and appearance will be.
6. What is the law by which men shall be judged.
7. What will be the cause of the day ; what the accusation, and what must be the just defence.
8. What will be the evidence.
9. What are those frivolous, insufficient excuses, by which the unrighteous may think to escape.
10. What will be the sentence : who shall die, and who shall live ; and what the reward and punishment is.
11. What are the properties of the sentence.
12. What and by whom the execution will be. In these particular heads we contain the whole doctrine of this judgment, and in this more familiar method shall handle it.

I. For the first, judgment, as taken largely, comprehendeth all the forementioned particulars ; as taken more strictly for the act of the judge, it is the trial of a controverted case. In our case, note these things following.

1. God's judgment is not intended for any discovery to himself of what he knows not already ; he knows already what all men are, and what they have done, and what is their due : but it is to discover to others, and to men themselves, the ground of his sentence, that so his judgment may attain its end : for the glorifying his grace on the righteous, and for the convincing the wicked of their sin and desert, and to show to all the world the righteousness of the judge, and of his sentence and execution. (Rom. iii. 4, 26 ; and Rom. ii. 2.)

2. It is not a controversy, therefore, undecided in the mind of God, that is there to be decided ; but only one that is undecided as to the knowledge and mind of creatures.

3. Yet is not this judgment a bare declaration, but a decision, and so a declaration thereupon : the cause will be then put out of controversy, and all further expectation of decision be at an end ; and with the justified there will be no more accusation, and with the condemned no more for ever.

II. For the second thing, who shall be the judge, I answer, the judge is God himself, by Jesus Christ.

1. Principally, God as Creator.

2. As also, God as Redeemer, the human nature of Jesus Christ having a derived subordinate power. God lost not his right to his creature, either by man's fall, or the redemption by Christ, but by the latter hath a new further right: but it is in and by Christ that God judgeth; for, as mere Creator of innocent man, God judgeth none, but hath committed all judgment to the Son, who hath procured his right by the redeeming of fallen man. (John v. 22.) But as the Son only doth it in the nearest sense, so the Father, as Creator, doth it remotely and principally.

1. In that the power of the Son is derived from the Father, and so standeth in subordination to him as fountain of efficient.

2. In that the judgment of the Son (as also his whole mediatorialship), is to bring men to God their Maker, as their ultimate end, and to recover them to him from whom they are fallen, and so as a means to that end, the judgment of the Son is subordinate to the Father.

From hence you may see these following truths worthy your consideration.

1. That all men are God's creatures, and none are the workmanship of themselves, or any other; or else the Creator should not judge them on that right.

2. That Christ died for all, and is the Redeemer of the world; and a sacrifice for all, or else he should not judge them on that right. For he will not judge wicked men as he will do the devils, as the mere enemies of his redeemed ones, but as being themselves his subjects in the world, and being bought by him; and therefore become his own, who ought to have glorified him that bought them. (2 Cor. v. 14, 15; 2 Pet. ii. 1; 1. Cor. vi. 9, 20; 1 John ii. 2; Heb. ii. 9; 1 Tim. ii. 6, 7.)

3. Hence, it appeareth that all men were under some law of grace, and did partake of some of the Redeemer's mercy. Though the gospel came not to all, yet all had that mercy which could come from no other fountain but his blood, and which should have brought them nearer to Christ than they were, (though it were not sufficient to bring them to believe,) and which should have led them to repentance. (Rom. ii. 4.) For the neglecting of which they justly perish, and not merely for sinning against the law that was given man in innocency: were that so, Christ would not judge them as Redeemer, and that for

the abuse or non-improvement of his talents, as he tells us he will do. (Matt. xxv. *per totum*.)

4. If God will be the judge, then none can expect, by any shifts or indirect means, to escape at that day. For how should it be ?

1. It is not possible that any should keep out of sight, or hide their sin, and the evil of their actions, and so delude the judge. "God will not be mocked now, nor deceived then." (Gal. vi. 7.) They grossly deceive themselves that imagine any such thing. God must be omniscient and all-seeing, or he cannot be God. Should you hide your case from men, and from devils, and be ignorant of it yourselves, yet you cannot hide it from God. Never did there a thought pass thy heart, or a word pass thy mouth, which God was not acquainted with: and as he knows them, so doth he observe them. He is not as imperfect man, taken up with other business, so that he cannot mind all; as easy it is with him to mind every thought, or word, or action of thine, as if he had but that one in the world to observe, and as easy to observe each particular sinner, as if he had but another creature to look after in the world. He is a fool indeed that thinks now that God takes no notice of him, (Ezek. viii. 12, and ix. 9,) or that thinketh then to escape in the crowd: he that found out one guest that had not on a wedding garment, (Matt. xxii. 12,) will then find out every unholy soul, and give him so sad a salutation as shall make him speechless. "For he knoweth vain man; he seeth wickedness also, and will he not consider it?" (Job xi. 11.)

2. It is not possible that any should escape at that day by any tricks of wit; any false reasoning in their own defence. God knoweth a sound answer from an unsound, and a truth from a lie. Righteousness may be perverted here on earth, by by outwitting the judge; but so will it not be then: to hope any of this, is to hope that God will not be God. It is in vain, then, for the unholy man to say he is holy; or a sinner to deny, or excuse, or extenuate his sin: to bring forth the counterfeit of any grace, and plead with God any shells of hypocritical performances, and to think to prove a title to heaven by any thing short of God's condition, all these will be vain attempts.

3. And as impossible will it prove by fraud or flattery, by persuasion or bribery, or by any other means, to pervert justice, by turning the mind of God, who is the judge. Fraud and flattery, bribery and importunity, may do much with weak men;

but with God, they will do nothing. Were he changeable and partial he were not God.

4. If God be judge, you may see the cavils of infidels are foolish, when they ask, 'How long will God be in trying and judging so many persons, and taking an account of so many words, and thoughts, and deeds? Sure it will be along time, and a difficult work.' As if God were as man, that knoweth not things, till he seek out their evidence by partial signs. Let these fools understand, if they have any understanding, that the infinite God can show to every man at once all the thoughts, and words, and actions, that ever he hath been guilty of. And in the twinkling of an eye, even at one view, can make all the world to see their ways, and their deservings, causing their consciences and memories to present them all before them, in such a sort, as shall be equivalent to a verbal debate; (Psalm l. 21, 22;) he will set them in order before them.

5. If Jesus Christ be the judge, then what a comfort must it needs be to his members that he shall be judge that loved them to the death, and whom they loved above their lives; and he who was their rock of hope and strength, and the desire and delight of their souls!

6. And if Jesus Christ must be the judge, what confusion will it bring to the faces of his enemies, and of all that set light by him in the day of their visitation, to see mercy turned against them; and he that died for them, now ready to condemn them; and that blood and grace, which did aggravate their sin, to be pleaded against them, to the increase of their misery; how sad will this be!

7. If the God of love, and grace, and truth, be judge, then no man need to fear any wrong. No subtlety of the accuser, nor darkness of evidence; no prejudice or partiality, or whatsoever else may be imagined, can there appear to the wrong of your cause. Get a good cause, and fear nothing; and if your cause be bad, nothing can deliver you.

III. For the third point, Who are they that must be judged?

Ans. All the rational creatures in this lower world, and it seems angels also, either all, or some. But because their case is more darkly made known to us, and less concerns us, we will pass it by. Every man that hath been made or born on earth, except Christ, who is God and man, and is the judge, must be judged. If any foolish infidels shall say, 'Where shall so

great a number stand?' I answer him, that he knoweth not the things invisible, either the nature of spirits and spiritual bodies, nor what place containeth them, or how, but easily he may know that he that gave them all a being, can sustain them all, and have room for them all, and can at once disclose the thoughts of all, as I said before.

The first in order to be judged are the saints, (Matt. xxv.,) and then with Christ they shall judge the rest of the world, (1 Cor. vi. 2, 3,) not in an equal authority and commission with Christ, but as the present approvers of his righteous judgment. The princes of the earth shall stand then before Christ, even as the peasants, and the honourable as the base; the rich and the poor shall meet together, and the Lord shall judge them all. (Prov. xxii. 2.) No men shall be excused from standing at that bar, and giving up their account, and receiving their doom. Learned and unlearned, young and old, godly and ungodly, all must stand there. I know some have vainly imagined that the righteous shall not have any of their sins mentioned, but their graces and duties only, but they consider not that things will not then be transacted by words as we do now, but by clear discoveries, by the infinite light; and that if God should not discover to them their sins, he would not discover the riches of his grace in the pardon of all these sins. Even then they must be humbled in themselves, that they may be glorified, and for ever cry, "Not unto us, Lord, but unto thy name, be the glory."

IV. For the fourth particular, Who will be the accuser?

Answ. 1. Satan is called in Scripture the accuser of the brethren, (Rev. xii. 10,) and we find in Job i. and other places, that now he doth practise even before God, and therefore we judge it probable that he will do so then. But we would determine of nothing that Scripture hath not clearly determined.

2. Conscience will be an accuser, though especially of the wicked, yet in some sense, of the righteous, for it will tell the truth to all. And, therefore, so far as men are faulty, it will tell them of their faults. The wicked it will accuse of unpardoned sin, and of sin unrepented of, the godly only of sin repented of, and pardoned. It will be a glass wherein every man may see the face of his heart and former life. (Rom. i. 15.)

3. The Judge himself will be the principal accuser, for it is he that prosecutes the cause, and will do justice on the wicked. God judgeth even the righteous themselves to be sinners, or

else they could not be pardoned sinners. But he judgeth the wicked to be impenitent, unbelieving, unconverted sinners. Remember what I said before, that it is not a verbal accusation but an opening of the truth of the cause to the view of ourselves and others, that God will then perform.

Nor can any think it unworthy of God to be men's accuser by such a disclosure, it being no dishonour to the purest light to reveal a dunghill, or to the greatest prince to accuse a traitor. Nor is it unmeet that God should be both accuser and judge, seeing he is both absolute Lord and perfectly just, and so far beyond all suspicion of injustice. His law, also, doth virtually accuse. (Job v. 45.) But of this by itself.

V. For the fifth particular, how will the sinners be called to the bar?

Answ. God will not stand to send them a citation, nor require him to make his voluntary appearance, but willing or unwilling, he will bring them in.

1. Before each man's particular judgment, he sendeth death to call away his soul, a surly serjeant, that will have no nay. How dear so ever this world may be to men, and how loth so ever they are to depart, away they must, and come before the Lord that made them. Death will not be bribed. Every man that was set in the vineyard in the morning of their lives, must be called out at evening to receive according to what he hath done. Then must the naked soul alone appear before its Judge, and be accountable for all that was done in the body, and be sent before till the final judgment, to remain in happiness or misery, till the body be raised again, and joined to it.

In this appearance of the soul before God, it seemeth by Scripture that there is some ministry of angels, for in Luke xvi. 22, it is said that the angels carried Lazarus, that is, his soul, into Abraham's bosom. What local motion there is, or situation of souls, is no fit matter for the inquiry of mortals. And what it is in this that the angels will do, we cannot clearly understand as yet, but most certain it is, that as soon as ever the soul is out of the body, it comes to its account before the God of spirits.

2. At the end of the world, the bodies of all men shall be raised from the earth, and joined again to their souls, and the soul and body shall be judged to their endless state, and this is the great and general judgment where all men shall at once appear. The same power of God that made men of nothing,

will as easily then re-make them by a resurrection, by which he will add much more perfection even to the wicked in their naturals, which will make them capable of the greater misery; even they shall have immortal and incorruptible bodies, which may be the subjects of immortal wo. (1 Cor. xv. 53; John v. 28, 29.)

Of this resurrection, and our appearance at judgment, the angels will be some way the ministers. As they shall come with Christ to judgment, so they shall sound his trumpet, (1 Thes. iv. 16,) and they shall gather the wicked out of God's kingdom, and they shall gather the tares to burn them. (Matt. xiii. 39—41,) In the end of the world, the angels shall come forth and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire. (Matt. xvii. 49, 50.)

VI. For the sixth particular, What law is it that men shall be judged by?

Ans. That which was given them to live by. God's law is but the sign of his will, to teach us what shall be due from us and to us; before we fell, he gave us such a law as was suitable to our perfection; when we had sinned, and turned from him, as we ceased not to be his creatures, nor he to be our Lord, so he destroyed not his law, nor discharged or absolved us from the duty of our obedience. But because we stood condemned by the law, and could be justified by it, having once transgressed it, he was pleased to make a law of grace, even a new, a remedying law, by which we might be saved from the deserved punishment of the old. So we shall be tried at judgment upon both these laws, but ultimately upon the last. The first law commanded perfect obedience, and threatened death to us if ever we disobeyed. The second law, finding us under the guilt of sin against the first, doth command us to repent, and believe in Christ, and so return to God by him, and promiseth us pardon of all our sins upon that condition, and also, if we persevere, everlasting glory. So that in judgment, though it must be first evinced that we are sinners, and have deserved death according to the law of pure nature, yet that is not the upshot of the judgment. For the inquiry will be next, whether they have accepted the remedy, and so obeyed the law of grace, and performed its condition for pardon and salvation, and upon this our life or death will depend. It is both these laws that condemn the wicked, but it is only the law of grace that justifieth the righteous.

Obj. But how shall heathens be judged by the law of grace, that never did receive it?

Ans. The express gospel some of them had not, and therefore shall not directly be judged by it, but much of the Redeemer's mercy they did enjoy, which should have led them to repent, and seek out after recovery from their misery, and to come nearer Christ, and for the neglect and abuse of this they shall be judged, and not merely for sinning against the law that was given us in pure innocency, so that Christ, as Redeemer, shall judge them as well as others. Though they had but one talent, yet must they give an account of that to the Redeemer, from whom they received it. But if any be unsatisfied in this, let them remember, that as God hath left the state of such more dark to us, and the terms on which he will judge them, so doth it much more concern us to look to the terms of our judgment.

Obj. But how shall infants be judged by the gospel that were incapable of it?

Ans. For ought I find in Scripture, they stand or fall with their parents, and on the same terms, but I leave each to their own thoughts.

VII. For the seventh head, what will be the cause of the day to be inquired after? What the accusation? And what the defence?

Ans. This may be gathered from what was last said. The great cause of the day will be to inquire and to determine who shall die, and who shall live; who ought to go to heaven, and who to hell for ever, according to the law by which they must then be judged.

1. As there is a twofold law by which they must be judged, so will there then be a twofold accusation. The first will be that they were sinners, and so having violated the law of God, they deserve everlasting death, according to that law. If no defence could be made, this one accusation would condemn all the world, for it is most certain that all are sinners, and as certain that all sin deserveth death. The only defence against this accusation lieth in this plea, confessing the charge, we must plead that Christ hath satisfied for sins, and upon that consideration, God hath forgiven us, and therefore, being forgiven, we ought not to be punished; to prove this, we must show the pardon under God's hand in the gospel. But because this pardoning act of the gospel doth forgive none but those that repent and believe, and so return to God, and to sincere obedience for the

time to come, therefore the next accusation will be, that we did not perform these conditions of forgiveness, and therefore, being unbelievers, impenitent, and rebels against the Redeemer, we have no right to pardon, but, by the sentence of the gospel, are liable to a greater punishment for the contempt of Christ and grace. This accusation is either true or false; where it is true, God and conscience, who speak the truth, may well be said to be the accusers. Where it is false, it can be only the work of Satan, the malicious adversary, who, as we may see in Job's case, will not stick to bring a false accusation.

If any think that the accuser will not do so vain a work, at least they may see that potentially this is the accusation that lieth against us, and which we must be justified against. For all justification implieth an actual or potential accusation.

He that is truly accused of final impenitency, or unbelief, or rebellion, hath no other defence to make, but must needs be condemned.

He that is falsely accused of such non-performance of the condition of grace, must deny the accusation, and plead his own personal righteousness as against that accusation, and produce that faith, repentance, and sincere obedience and perseverance by which he fulfilled that condition, and so is evangelically righteous in himself, and therefore hath part in the blood of Christ, which is instead of a legal righteousness to him in all things else, as having procured him a pardon of all his sin, and a right to everlasting glory.

And thus we must then be justified by Christ's satisfaction only, against the accusation of being sinners in general, and of deserving God's wrath for the breach of the law of works. But we must be justified by our faith, repentance, and sincere obedience itself, against the accusation of being impenitent unbelievers, and rebels against Christ, and having not performed the condition of the promise, and so having no part in Christ and his benefits.

So that in sum you see, that the cause of the day will be to inquire, whether, being all known sinners, we have accepted of Christ upon his terms, and so have a right in him and his benefits, or not? Whether they have forsaken this vain world for him, and loved him so faithfully that they have manifested it in parting with these things at his command? And this is the meaning of Matt. xxv., where the inquiry is made to be whether they have fed and visited him in his members, or not?

That is, whether they so far loved him as their Redeemer, and God by him, as that they have manifested this to his members according to opportunity, though it cost them the hazard or loss of all, seeing danger, and labour, and cost are fitter to express love by, than empty compliments, and bare professions.

Whether it be particularly inquired after, or only taken for granted, that men are sinners, and have deserved death according to the law of works, and that Christ hath satisfied by his death, is all one as to the matter in hand, seeing God's inquiry is but the discovery and conviction of us. But the last question which must decide the controversy, will be, whether we have performed the condition of the gospel.

I have the rather also said all this, to show you in what sense these words are taken in the text, that "every man shall be judged according to what he hath done in the flesh, whether it be good or bad." Though every man be judged worthy of death for sinning, yet every man shall not be judged to die for it, and no man shall be judged worthy of life for his good works. It is, therefore, according to the gospel, as the rule of judgment, that this is meant. They that have repented and believed, and returned to true, though imperfect obedience, shall be judged to everlasting life, according to these works, not because these works deserve it, but because the free gift in the gospel, through the blood of Christ, doth make these things the condition of our possessing it. They that have lived and died impenitent unbelievers, and rebels against Christ, shall be judged to everlasting punishment, because they have deserved it, both by their sin in general against the law, and by these sins in special against the gospel. This is called the merit of the cause, that is, what is a man's due according to the true meaning of the law, though the due may be by free gift. And thus you see what will be the cause of the day, and the matter to be inquired after and decided, as to our life or death.

VIII. The next point in our method is to show you what shall be the evidence of the cause.

Answ. There is a five-fold evidence among men. 1. When the fact is notorious. 2. The knowledge of an unsuspected competent judge. 3. The party's confession. 4. Witness. 5. Instruments and visible effects of the action. All these evidences will be at hand, and any one of them sufficient for the conviction of the guilty person at that day.

1. As the sins of all men, so the impenitency and rebellion of

the wicked was notorious, or at least will be then : for though some play the hypocrites, and hide the matter from the world and themselves, yet God shall open their hearts and former lives to themselves, and to the view of all the world. He shall set their sins in order before them, so that it shall be utterly in vain to deny or excuse them. If any men will then think to make their cause as good to God as they can now do to us, who are not able to see their hearts, they will be foully mistaken. Now they can say they have as good hearts as the best ; then God will bring them out in the light, and show them to themselves, and all the world, whether they were good or bad. Now they will face us down that they do truly repent, and they obey God as they can ; but God, who knoweth the deceivers, will then undeceive them. We cannot now make men acquainted with their own unsanctified hearts, nor convince them that have not true faith, repentance, or obedience ; but God will convince them of it : they can find shifts and false answers to put off a minister with, but God will not be so shifted off. Let us preach as plainly to them as we can, and do all that ever we are able, to acquaint them with the impenitence and unholiness of their own heart, and the necessity of a new heart and life ; yet we cannot do it, but they will believe, whether we will or not, that the old heart will serve the turn. But how easily will God make them know the contrary. We plead with them in the dark ; for though we have the candle of the gospel in our hands when we come to show them their corruption, yet they shut their eyes, and are wilfully blind ; but God will open their eyes whether they will or not ; not by holy illumination, but by forced conviction, and then he will plead with them as in the open light. See here thine own unholy soul ; canst thou now say thou didst love me above all ? Canst thou deny but thou didst love this world before me, and serve thy flesh and lusts, though I told thee if thou didst so thou shouldst die ? Look upon thy own heart now, and see whether it be an holy or an unholy heart ; a spiritual or a fleshly heart ; a heavenly or an earthly heart. Look now upon all the course of thy life, and see whether thou didst live to me, or to the world and thy flesh. Oh ! how easily will God convince men, then, of the very sins of their thoughts, and in their secret closets, when they thought that no witness could have disclosed them. Therefore, it is said that the books shall be opened, and the dead judged out of the books. (Rev. xx. 12 ; Dan. vii. 10.)

2. The second evidence will be the knowledge of the Judge. If the sinner would not be convinced, yet it is sufficient that the Judge knoweth the cause : God needeth no further witness : he saw thee committing adultery in secret, lying, stealing, forswearing, in secret. If thou dost not know thy own heart to be unholy, it is enough that God knoweth it. If you have the face to say, "Lord, when we did see thee an hungry," &c., (Matt. xxv. 44. ;) yet God will make good the charge against thee, and there needeth no more testimony than his own. Can foolish sinners think to lie hid, or escape at that day, who will now sin wilfully before their Judge ; who know, every day, their Judge is looking on them, while they forget him and give up themselves to the world, and yet go on, even under his eye, as if to his face they dared him to punish them ?

3. The third evidence will be the sinner's confession. God will force their own consciences to witness against them, and their own tongues to confess the accusation. If they do at first excuse it, he will leave them speechless, yea, and condemning themselves before they have done.

Oh ! what a difference between their language now and then. Now we cannot tell them of their sin and misery, but they either tell us of our own faults, or bid us look to ourselves, or deny or excuse their fault, or make light of it : but then their own tongues shall confess them, and cry out of the wilful folly which they committed, and lay a heavier charge upon them than we can now do. Now, if we tell them that we are afraid they are unregenerate, and lest their hearts are not truly set upon God, they will tell us they hope to be saved with such hearts as they have. But then, oh ! how they will confess the folly and falseness of their own hearts. You may see a little of their case even in despairing sinners on earth, how far they are from denying or excusing their sins. Judas cries out, "I sinned in betraying the innocent blood." (Matt. xxiv. 7.) Out of their own mouth shall they be judged. That very tongue that now excuseth their sin, will, in their torments, be their great accuser ; for God will have it so to be.

4. The fourth evidence will be the witness of others. Oh ! how many thousand witnesses might there be produced, were there need to convince the guilty soul at that day !

1. All the ministers of Christ that ever preached to them, or warned them, will be sufficient witnesses against them. We must needs testify that we preached to them the truth of the gospel,

and they would not believe it. We preached to them the goodness of God, yet they set not their hearts upon him. We showed them their sin, and they were not humbled. We told them of the danger of an unregenerate state, and they did not regard us. We acquainted them with the absolute necessity of holiness, but they made light of all. We let them know the deceitfulness of their hearts, and the need of a close and faithful examination, but they would not bestow an hour in such a work, nor scarce once be afraid of being mistaken and miscarrying. We let them know the vanity of this world, and yet they would not forsake it, no, not for Christ, and the hopes of glory. We told them of the everlasting felicity they might attain, but they would not set themselves to seek it.

What we shall think of it then the Lord knows ; but surely it seemeth now to us a matter of very sad consideration, that we must be brought in as witnesses against the souls of our neighbours and friends in the flesh. Those whom we now unfeignedly love, and would do any thing that we were able to do for their good ; whose welfare is dearer to us than all worldly enjoyments ; alas ! that we must be forced to testify to their faces for their condemnation. Ah ! Lord, with what a heart must a poor minister study when he considereth this, that all the words that he is studying must be brought in for a witness against many of his hearers. With what a heart must a minister preach when he remembereth that all the words that he is speaking must condemn many, if not most of his hearers ? Do we desire this sad fruit of our labours ? No ; we may say with the prophet, " I have not desired the woful day, thou knowest." (Jer. xvii. 16.) No ; if we desired it, we would not do so much to prevent it : we would not study, and preach, and pray, and entreat men, that if it were possible we might not be put on such a task : and, doubtless, it should make every honest minister study hard, and pray hard, and entreat hard, and stoop low to men, and be earnest with men in season and out of season, that if it may be they may not be the condemners of their people's souls. But if men will not hear, and there be no remedy, who can help it ? Christ himself came not into the world to condemn men, but to save them, and yet he will condemn those who will not yield to his saving work. God takes no pleasure in the death of a sinner, but rather that he repent and live : (Ezek. xviii. 23, 32 :) and yet he will rejoice over those to do them hurt, and destroy them who will not return : (Deut. xxviii. 63 :) and if we must be put on such a work, he will make us like-minded. The

Holy Ghost tells us that the saints shall judge the world ; (1 Cor. vi. 2, 3 ;) and if they must judge, they will judge as God judgeth. You cannot blame us for it, sinners. We now warn you of it beforehand, and if you will not prevent it, blame not us, but yourselves. Alas ! we are not our own masters. As we now speak not to you in our own names, so then we may not do what we list ourselves ; or if we might, our will will be as God's will. God will make us judge you, and witness against you : can we absolve you when the righteous God will condemn you ? When God is against you, whose side would you have us be of ? We must be either against God or you ; and can you think that we should be for any one against our Maker and Redeemer ? We must either condemn the sentence of Jesus Christ, or condemn you ; and is not there more reason to condemn you than him ? Can we have any mercy on you, when he that made you will not save you, and he that formed you will show you no mercy ? (Isaiah xxvii. 11 ;) yea, when he that died for you will condemn you, shall we be more merciful than God ? But, alas ! if we should be so foolish and unjust, what good would it do you ? If we would be false witnesses and partial judges, it would not save you ; we are not justified if we absolve ourselves. (1 Cor. iv. 5.) How unable, then, shall we be, against God's sentence, to justify you. If all the world should say you were holy and penitent, when God knows you were unholy and impenitent, it will do you no good. You pray every day that his will may be done, and it will be done. It will be done upon you, because it was not done by you. What would you have us say if God ask us, ' Did you tell this sinner of the need of Christ, of the glory of the world to come, and the vanity of this ? ' Should we lie, and say we did not ? What should we say if he ask us, ' Did not you tell them the misery of their natural state, and what would become of them if they were not made new ? ' Would you have us lie to God, and say we did not ? Why, if we did not, your blood will be required at our hands : (Ezek. xxxiii. 6, and iii. 18 :) and would you have us bring your blood upon our own heads by a lie ? Yea, and to do you no good, when we know that lies will not prevail with God ? No, no, sinners ; we must unavoidably testify to the confusion of your faces : if God ask us, we must bear witness against you, and say, ' Lord, we did what we could, according to our weak abilities, to reclaim them : indeed, our own thoughts of everlasting things were so low, and our hearts so dull, that we must confess we did not follow them

so close, nor speak so earnestly, as we should have done. We did not cry so loud, or lift up our voice as a trumpet to awaken them. (Isaiah lviii. i.) We confess we did not speak to them with such melting compassion, and with such streams of tears beseech them to regard, as a matter of such great concernment should have been spoken with : we did not fall on our knees to them, and so earnestly beg of them, for the Lord's sake, to have mercy upon their own souls, as we should have done. But yet we told them the message of God, and we studied to speak it to them as plainly and as piercingly as we could. Fain we would have convinced them of their sin and misery, but we could not : fain we would have drawn them to the admiration of Christ, but they made light of it. (Matt. xxii. 5.) We would fain have brought them to the contempt of this vain world, and to set their mind on the world to come, but we could not. Some compassion thou knowest, Lord, we had to their souls : many a weeping or groaning hour we have had in secret, because they would not hear and obey, and some sad complaints we made over them in public. We told them that they must shortly die, and come to judgment, and that this world would deceive them, and leave them in the dust. We told them that the time was at hand when nothing but Christ would do them good, and nothing but the favour of God would be sufficient for their happiness, but we could never get them to lay it to heart. Many a time did we entreat them to think soberly of this life, and the life to come, and to compare them together with the faith of Christians, and the reason of men, but they would not do it. Many a time did we entreat them but to take now and then an hour in secret to consider who made them, and for what he had made them, and why they were sent into this world, and what their business here is, and whither they are going, and how it will go with them at their latter end ; but we could never get most of them to spend one hour in serious thoughts of these weighty matters. Many a time did we entreat them to try whether they were regenerate or not, whether Christ and his Spirit were in them or not, whether their souls were brought back to God by sanctification, but they would not try. We did beseech them to make sure work, and not leave such a matter as everlasting joy or torment to a bold and mad adventure, but we could not prevail. We entreated them to lay all other business aside a little while in the world, and to inquire, by the direction of the word of God, what would become of them in the world to come ;

and to judge themselves before God came to judge them, seeing they had the law and rule of judgment before them, but their minds were blinded, and their hearts were hardened, and the profit and pleasure, and honour of this world did either stop their ears, or quickly steal away their hearts, so that we could never get them to a sober consideration, nor ever win their hearts to God.

'This will be the witness that many a hundred ministers of the gospel must give in against the souls of their people at that day. Alas! that you ever should cast this upon us! For the Lord's sake, sirs, pity your poor teachers, if you pity not yourselves! We had rather go a thousand miles for you; we had rather be scorned and abused for your sakes; we had rather lay our hands under your feet, and beseech you on our knees with tears, were we able, than be put on such a work as this. It is you that will do it if it be done. We had rather follow you from house to house, and teach and exhort you, if you will but hear us, and accept of our exhortation. Your souls are precious in our eyes, for we know they were so in the eyes of Christ, and therefore we are loth to see this day; we were once in your case, and therefore know what it is to be blind, and careless, and carnal, as you are, and therefore would fain obtain your deliverance. But if you will not hear, but we must accuse you, and we must condemn you, the Lord judge between you and us, for we can witness that it was full sore against our wills. We have been faulty, indeed, in doing no more for you, and not following you with restless importunity; (the good Lord forgive us!) but yet we have not betrayed you by silence.

2. All those that fear God, that have lived among ungodly men, will also be sufficient witnesses against them. Alas! they must be put upon the same work, which is very unpleasant to their thoughts, as ministers are; they must witness before the Lord that they did, as friends and neighbours, admonish them: that they gave them a good example, and endeavoured to walk in holiness before them; but, alas! the most did but mock them, and call them puritans, and precise fools, and they made more ado than needs for their salvation: they must be forced to testify, ' Lord, we would fain have drawn them with us to hear the word, and to read it, and to pray in their families, and to sanctify the holy day, and take such happy opportunities for their souls; but we could not get them to it; we did in our places what we were able to give them, the example of a godly

conversation, and they did but deride us; they were readier to mark every slip of our lives, and to observe all our infirmities, and to catch at any accusation that was against us, than to follow us in any work of holy obedience, or care for our everlasting peace.' The Lord knows it is a most heavy thing to consider now, that poor neighbours must be fain to come in against those they love so dearly, and by their testimony to judge them to perdition. Oh! heavy case to think of, that a master must witness against his own servant! Yea, a husband against his own wife, and a wife against her husband; yea, parents against their own children, and say, 'Lord, I taught them thy word, but they would not learn; I told them what would come on it if they returned not to thee; I brought them to sermons, and I prayed with them and for them. I frequently minded them of these everlasting things, and of this dreadful day which they now see. But youthful lusts, and the temptations of the flesh and the devil, led them away, and I could never get them thoroughly and soundly to lay it to their hearts.' Oh! you that are parents, and friends, and neighbours, in the fear of God, bestir you now, that you may not be put to this at that day of judgment. Oh, give them no rest, take no nay of them till you have persuaded their hearts from this world to God, lest you be put to be their condemners. It must be now that you must prevent it, or else never; now while you are with them, while you and they are in the flesh together, which will be but a little while. Can you but now prevail with them all will be well, and you may meet them joyfully before the Lord.

3. Another witness that will testify against the ungodly at that day, will be their sinful companions. Those that drew them into sin, or were drawn by them, or joined with them in it. Oh! little do poor drunkards think, when they sit merrily in an alehouse, that one of them must bear witness against another, and condemn one another. If they thought of this, methinks it should make them have less delight in that company. Those that now join with you in wickedness, shall then be forced to witness, 'I confess, Lord, I did hear him swear and curse; I heard him deride those that feared the Lord, and make a jest of a holy life; I saw him in the alehouse when he should be hearing the word of God, or reading, or calling upon God, and preparing for this day; I joined with him in fleshly delights, in abusing thy creature, and our own bodies.' Sinners, look your companions in the face the next time you are with

them, and remember this that I now say, that those men shall give in evidence against you that now are your associates in all your mirth; little think the fornicator and lustful wanton, that their sinful mates must then bear witness of that which they thought the dark had concealed, and tell their shame before all the world. But this must be the fruit of sin. It is meet that they who once encouraged one another in sin, should condemn one another for it. And marvel not at it, for they shall be forced to it, whether they will or no. Light will not then be hid; they may think to have some ease to their consciences by accusing and condemning others. When Adam is questioned for his sins, he presently accuseth the woman. (Gen. iii. 12.) When the conscience of Judas was awakened, he runs to the pharisees with the money that drew him to it, and they cast it back in his own face, "See thou to it, what is that to us?" (Matt. xxvii. 4—6.) Oh! the cold comfort that sinners will have at that day, and the little pleasure that they will find in remembering their evil ways. Now, when a fornicator, or a worldling, or a merry voluptuous man, is grown old, and cannot act all his sin again, he takes pleasure in remembering and telling others of his former folly, what he once was, and what he did, and the merry hours that he had, but then when sinners are come to themselves a little more, they will remember and tell one another of these things with another heart. Oh! that they did but know how these things will then affect them!

4. Another witness that will then rise up against them will be the very devils that tempted them. They that did purposely draw them to sin, that they might draw them to torment for sin. They can witness that you hearkened to their temptations when you would not hearken to God's exhortations. They can witness that you obeyed them in working iniquity. But because you may think the accuser's testimony is not to be taken, I will not stand on this, though it is not nothing where God knoweth it to be true.

5. The very angels of God also may be witnesses against the wicked, therefore are we advised in Scripture not to sin before them. (Eccl. v. 6; 1 Cor. xi. 10; 1 Tim. v. 21.) I charge thee before the elect angels, &c. They can testify that they would have been ministering spirits for their good, when the wicked rather chose to be slaves to the spirit of maliciousness. The holy angels of God do many a time stand by when you are sinning. They see you when you see not them; they are em-

ployed by God in some sort for your good as well as we. And as it is the grief of ministers that their labours succeed not, so may we suppose that according to their state and nature it is theirs. For they that rejoice in heaven at the conversion of one sinner, may be said to sorrow, or to lose those joys, when you refuse to be converted. These noble spirits; these holy and glorious attendants of Christ, that shall wait upon him to judgment, will be witnesses against rebellious sinners, to their confusion. Sirs, you have all in you naturally a fear of spirits, and invisible powers; fear them aright, lest hearkening to the deceiving spirits, and refusing the help of the angels of God, and wilfully sinning before their faces, you should cause them, at that day, to the terror of your souls, to stand forth as witnesses against you, to your condemnation.

6. Conscience itself will be a most effectual witness against the wicked at that day; I before told you it will be a discernor, and force them to a confession, but a farther office it hath, even to witness against them. If none else in the world had known of their secret sins, conscience will say, 'I was acquainted with them.'

7. The Spirit of Christ can witness against the ungodly that he oft moved them to repent and return, and they rejected his motions; that he spoke to their hearts in secret, and oft set in with the minister, and often minded them of their case, and persuaded them to God, but they resisted, quenched, and grieved the Spirit. (Acts vii. 51.) As the Spirit witnesseth with the spirits of the righteous that they are the children of God, (Rom. viii. 16,) so doth he witness, with the conscience of the wicked, that they were children of rebellion, and therefore are justly children of wrath. This Spirit will not always strive with men; at last, being vexed, it will prove their enemy, and rise up against them. (Gen. vi. 3; Isa. lxiii. 10.) If you will needs grieve it now, it will grieve you then. Were it not a Spirit of grace, and were it not free mercy that it came to offer you, the repulse would not have been so condemning, nor the witness of this Spirit so heavy at the last. But it was the Spirit of Jesus that came with recovering grace, which you resisted, and though the wages of every sin is death, yet you will find that it will cost you somewhat more to reject this salvation, than to break the Creator's law of works. Kindness, such kindness, will not be rejected at easy rates.

Many a good motion is now made by the Spirit to the heart

of a sinner, which he doth not so much as once observe, and therefore doth not now remember them. But then they shall be brought to his remembrance with a witness. Many a thousand secret motions to repentance, to faith, to a holy life, will be then set before the eyes of the poor, unpardoned, trembling sinner, which he had quite forgotten, and the Spirit of God shall testify to his confusion. At such a sermon I persuaded thy heart to repent, and thou wouldest not; at such a time I showed thee the evil of thy sin, and persuaded thee to have forsaken it, but thou wouldest not. I minded thee in thy secret thoughts of the nearness of judgment, and the certainty and weight of everlasting things, the need of Christ, and faith, and holiness, and of the danger of sinning, but thou didst drown all my motions in the cares and pleasures of the world. Thou hearkenest rather to the devil than to me. The sensual inclinations of thy flesh did prevail against the strongest arguments that I used. Though I showed reasons, undeniable reasons, from thy Creator, from thy Redeemer, from nature, from grace, from heaven, and from hell, yet all would not so much as stop thee, much less turn thee, but thou wouldest go on; thou wouldest follow thy flesh, and now let it pay thee the wages of thy folly; thou wouldest be thy own guide, and take thine own course, and now take what thou gettest by it.

Poor sinners! I beseech you, in the fear of God, the next time you have any such motions from the Spirit of God, to repent, and believe, and break off your sins, and the occasions of them; consider then what a mercy is set before you, and how it will confound you, at the day of judgment, to have all these motions brought in against you, and that the Spirit of grace itself should be your condemner. Alas! that men should choose their own destruction, and wilfully choose it, and that the foreknowledge of these things should not move them to relent!

So much concerning the witness that will be brought in against the sinner.

5. The fifth evidence that will be given against the sinner will be the instruments and effects. You know, among men, if a man be found murdered by the highway, and you are found standing by, with a bloody sword in your hand, especially if there were a former dissension between you, it will be an evidence that will prove a strong presumption that you were the murderer, but if the fact be certain by other evidence, then many such things may be brought for aggravation of the fault.

So a twofold evidence will be brought against the sinner from these things ; one to prove him guilty of the fact, the other to aggravate the fault, and prove that his sin was very great.

For the former, 1. The very creatures which sinners abused to sin, may be brought in against them to their conviction and condemnation. For though these creatures shall be consumed with the last destroying fire, which shall consume all the world, yet shall they have a being in the memory of the sinner, an *esse cognitum*. The very wine or ale, or other liquor, which was abused to drunkenness, may witness against the drunkard. The sweet morsels by which the glutton did please his appetite, and all the good creatures of God which he luxuriously devoured, may witness against him. (Luke xvi. 19, 25.) He that fared deliciously every day in this life, was told by Abraham when he was dead, and his soul in hell, "Remember that thou in thy lifetime receivest thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things, but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented ;" though their sweet morsels and cups are past and gone, yet must they be remembered at judgment and in hell. "Remember, son," saith Abraham ; yea, and remember he must, whether he will or no. Long was the glutton in sinning, and many a pleasant bit did he taste, and so many evidences of his sin will lie against him, and the sweetness will then be turned into gall.

The very clothing and ornaments by which proud persons did manifest their pride, will be sufficient evidence against them, as his being clothed with purple and fine linen is mentioned. (Luke xvi. 19.)

The very lands, and goods, and houses of worldlings will be an evidence against them. Their gold and silver, which the covetous do now prefer before the everlasting riches with Christ, will be an evidence against them. "Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten ; your gold and silver is cankered, and the rust of them will be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. Behold the hire of the labourers, who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth ; and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabbaoth. Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton. Ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter." (James v. 1—5.) Oh ! that worldlings would well consider this one

text, and therein observe whether a life of earthly pleasure, and fulness of worldly glory and gallantry, be as desirable as they imagine, and to what time and purpose they now lay up their treasures, and how they must hear of these things hereafter, and what effect the review of their jovial days will have upon their miserable, condemned souls.

2. The very circumstances of time, place, and the like, may evidence against his condemnation. The drunkard shall remember, in such an alehouse I was so oft drunk, and in such a tavern I wasted my time. The adulterer and fornicator shall remember the very time, the place, the room, the bed where they committed wickedness. The thief and deceiver will remember the time, place, and the persons they wronged, and the things which they robbed or deceived them of. The worldling will remember the business which he preferred before the service of God, the worldly matters which had more of his heart than his Maker and Redeemer had, the work which he was doing when he should have been praying, or reading, or catechising his family, or thinking soberly of his latter end. A thousand of these will then come into his mind, and be as so many evidences against him to his condemnation.

3. The very effects, also, of men's sins will be an evidence against them. The wife and children of a drunkard are impoverished by his sin; his family and the neighbourhood are disquieted by him. These will be so many evidences against him. So will the abuse of his own reason, the enticing of others to the same sin, and hardening them by his example.

One covetous, unmerciful landlord doth keep an hundred, or many hundred, persons or families in so great necessities, and care, and labour, that they are tempted by it to overpass the service of God, as having scarce time for it, or any room for it in their troubled thoughts; all these miserable families and persons, and all the souls that are undone by this temptation, will be so many evidences against such oppressors.

Yea, the poor whom they have neglected to relieve when they might, the sick whom they have neglected to visit when they might, will all witness then against the unmerciful. (Matt. xxv.)

The many ignorant, worldly, careless sinners that have perished under an idle and unfaithful minister, will be so many witnesses against him to his condemnation. They may then cry out against him to his face, 'I was ignorant, Lord, and he never did so much as teach me, catechise me, nor tell me of

these things. I was careless, and minded the world, and he let me go on quietly, and was as careless as I, and had never plainly and faithfully warned me, to wake me from my security.' And so their blood will be required at his hands, though themselves also shall perish in their sins. (Ezek. xxxiii. 7, 8.)

And as these evidences will convince men of sin, so there are many more which will convince them of the greatness of their sin. And these are so many that it would too much lengthen my discourse to stand on them. A few I shall briefly touch.

1. The very mercy of God in creating men, in giving and continuing their being to them, will be an evidence for the aggravation of their sin against him. What, will you abuse Him by whom it is that you are men? Will you speak to his dishonour that giveth you your speech? Will you live to his dishonour who giveth you your lives? Will you wrong him by his own creatures, and neglect Him without whom you cannot subsist?

2. The redemption of men by the Lord Jesus Christ will be an evidence to the exceeding aggravation of their sins. You sinned against the Lord that bought you. (1 Pet. ii. 1.) When the feast was prepared, and all things were ready, you made light of it, and found excuses, and would not come. (Matt. xxii. 4—6; Luke xiv. 17, 18.) Must Christ redeem you, by so dear a price, from sin and misery, and yet will you continue the servants of sin, and prefer your slavery before your freedom, and choose to be Satan's drudges, rather than to be the servants of God? The sorrows and sufferings that Christ underwent for you will then prove the increase of your own sorrows. As a neglected Redeemer it is that he will condemn you; and then you would be glad that it were but true doctrine that Christ never died for you, that you might not be condemned for refusing a Redeemer, and sinning against him that shed his blood for you. How deeply will his wounds then wound your consciences! You will then remember, that to this end he hath died, rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and the living, and that he therefore died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live to themselves, but to him that died for them, and rose again. (Rom. xiv. 9; 2 Cor. v. 14, 15; Matt. xxviii. 18—20; 1 Peter i. 17, 18.) You will then understand that you were not your own, but were bought with a price, and therefore should have glorified him that bought

you, with your bodies and spirits, because they were his. (1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.) This one aggravation of your sin will make you doubly and remedilessly miserable, that you trod under foot the Son of God, and counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith you were sanctified, an unholy thing, (Heb. x. 26—29.) and crucified to yourselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to open shame. (Heb. vi. 5, 6.)

3. Moreover, all the personal mercies which they received will be so many evidences for the condemnation of the ungodly. The very earth that bore them, and yielded them its fruits, while they themselves are unfruitful to God, the air which they breathed in, the food which nourished them, the clothes which covered them, the houses which they dwelt in, the beasts that laboured for them, and all the creatures that died for their use, all these may rise up against them to their condemnation. And the Judge may thus expostulate with them, 'Did all these mercies deserve no more thanks? Should you not have served Him that so liberally maintained you? God thought not all these too good for you, and did you think your hearts and services too good for him? He served you with the weary labours of your fellow-creatures, and should you have grudged to bear his easy yoke? They were your slaves and drudges, and you refused to be his free servants and his sons. They suffered death to feed your bodies, and you would not suffer the short forbearance of a little forbidden fleshly pleasure for the sake of him that made you and redeemed you.'

Oh! how many thousand mercies of God will then be reviewed by those that neglected them to the horror of their souls, when they shall be upbraided by the Judge with their base requital! All the deliverances from sickness and from danger, all the honours and privileges, and other commodities, which so much contented them, will then be God's evidence to shame them and confound them. On this supposition doth the apostle reprove such, "Despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hard and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to every man according to his deeds." (Rom. ii. 4—6.)

4. Moreover, all the means which God used for the recovery of sinners in the day of their visitation will rise up against im-

penitent souls, in judgment to their condemnation. You can hear sermons carelessly and sleepily now; but, oh! that you would consider how the review of them will then awake you! You now make light of the warnings of God and man, and of all the wholesome advice that is given you, but God will not then make light of your contempt. Oh! what cutting questions will they be to the hearts of the ungodly, when all the means that were used for their good are brought to their remembrance on one side, and the temptations that drew them to sin on the other side; and the Lord shall plead his cause with their consciences, and say, 'Was I so hard a master, or was my work so unreasonable, or were my wages so contemptible, that no persuasions could draw you into my service? Was Satan so good a master, or was his work so honest and profitable, or were his wages so desirable, that you would be so easily persuaded to do as he would have you? Was there more persuading reason in his allurements and deceits than in all my holy words, and all the powerful sermons that you heard, or all the faithful admonitions you received, or all the good examples of the righteous, or in all the works of God which you beheld? Was not a reason fetched from the love of God, from the evil of sin, the blood of Christ, the judgment to come, the glory promised, the torments threatened, as forcible with you, and as good in your eyes to draw you to holiness, as a reason from a little fleshly delight or worldly gain, to draw you to be unholy?'

In the name of God, sinners, I entreat you to bethink yourselves in time, how you will sufficiently answer such questions as these. You should have seen God in every creature you beheld, and have read your duty in all his works; what can you look upon above you, or below you, or round you, which might not have showed you so much of the wisdom, and goodness, and greatness of your Maker, as should have convinced you that it was your duty to be devoted to his will; and yet you have his written word which speaks plainer than all these; and will you despise them all? Will you not see so great a light? Will you not hear so loud and constant calls? Shall God and his ministers speak in vain? And can you think that you shall not hear of this again, and pay for it one day? You have the Bible and other good books by you, why do you not read them? You have ministers at hand, why do you not go to them, and earnestly ask them, Sir, "What must I do to be saved," and entreat them to teach you the way to life? You have some neigh-

bours that fear God, why do you not go to them, and take their good advice, and imitate them in the fear of God, and in a holy diligence for your souls? Now is the time for you to bestir yourselves; life and death are before you. You have gales of grace to further your voyage. There are more for you than against you. God will help you, his Spirit will help you, the ministers will help you, every good Christian will help you, the angels themselves will help you, if you will resolutely set yourselves to the work; and yet will you not stir? Patience is waiting on you, mercies are enticing you, scourges are driving you, judgment stayeth for you, the lights of God stand burning by you to direct you, and yet will you not stir, but lie in darkness; and do you not think you shall not hear of this; do you think this will not one day cost you dear?

IX. The ninth part of our work is to show you what are those frivolous excuses by which the unrighteous may then endeavour their defence.

Having already showed you what the defence must be that must be sufficient to our justification:

If any first demand whether the evidence of their sin will not so overwhelm the sinner, that he will be speechless, and past excuse, I answer, before God hath done with him he will be so. But it seems, at first, his dark understanding and partial corrupted conscience, will set him upon a vain defence; for Christ telleth us that "Many will say to me in that day, Lord! Lord! have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name have cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works? and then will I profess unto them, I never knew you, depart from me, ye that work iniquity." (Matt. vii. 22, 23.) And in Matt. xxv. 11, the foolish virgins cry, "Lord! Lord! open to us:" and ver. 44, "Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?" and ver. 24, 25, they fear not to cast some of the cause of their neglect on God himself: "Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed, and I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth; lo! there thou hast that is thine."

It is clear, then, that excuses they will be ready to make, and their full conviction will be in order after these excuses, (at least, as in their minds, if not in words.) But what the particular

excuses will be, we may partly know by these Scriptures which recite them, and partly by what the ungodly do now say for themselves: and because it is for their present benefit that I now make mention of them, that they may see the vanity of all such excuses, I will mention them as I now meet with them in the mouths of sinners in our ordinary discourse; and these excuses are of several sorts—some by which they would justify their estate; some excuses of particular actions, and that either in whole or in part; some by which they would put by the penalty, though they confess the sin; some by which they lay the blame on other men, and in some they would cast it upon God himself. I must touch but some of them very briefly.

The first excuse: 'I am not guilty of these things which I am accused of, I did love God above all, and my neighbour as myself: I did use the world but for necessity, but God had my heart.'

Answ. The all-seeing Judge doth know the contrary; and he will make thy conscience know it. Look back, man, upon thy heart and life! How seldom and how neglectfully didst thou think of God! How coldly didst thou worship him, or make any mention of him! How carelessly didst thou serve him! And think much of all that thou didst therein. Thou rather thoughtest that his service was making more ado than needs, and didst grudge at those who were more diligent than thyself; but for the world, how heartily and how constantly didst thou seek and serve it? And yet wouldst thou now persuade the Judge that thou didst love God above all? He will show thee thy naked heart, and the course of thy former life, which shall convince thee of the contrary.

The second excuse: 'I lived not in any gross sin, but only in small infirmities: I was no murderer, or adulterer, or fornicator, or thief; nor did I deceive or wrong any, or take any thing by violence.'

Answ. Was it not a gross sin to love the world above God, and to neglect Christ that died for thee, and never to do him one hour's hearty service, but merely to seek thy carnal self, and to live to thy flesh? God will open thine eyes then, and show thee a thousand gross sins, which thou now forgettest, or makest light of; and it is not only gross sin, but all sin, great or small, that deserveth the wrath of God, and will certainly bring thee under it for ever, if thou have not part in Christ to relieve thee. Wo to the man that ever he was born that must answer in his own name for his smallest offences!

The third excuse : ' I did it ignorantly ; I knew not that there was so much required to my salvation. I thought less ado might have served the turn ; and that if I looked to my body, God would take care of my soul, and that it was better to trust him what would become of me hereafter, than to trouble my mind so much about it. Had I known better, I would have done better.'

Ans. 1. If you knew not better, who was it along of but yourself? Did God hide these things from you? Did he not tell them you in his word as plainly as the tongue of man can speak, that except you were regenerate and born again, you should not enter into the kingdom of God; (John iii. 3, 5;) that without holiness none should see God; (Heb. xii. 14;) that you must strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many shall seek to enter, and shall not be able: (Luke xiii. 24:) that if you lived after the flesh you should die; and if by the Spirit you mortified the deeds of the body you should live: (Rom. viii. 13:) that if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, the same is none of his; (Rom. viii. 9:) and to be carnally-minded is death, but to be spiritually-minded is life and peace: (Rom. viii. 9:) that you must not lay up for yourselves a treasure on earth, where rust and moth do corrupt, and thieves break through and steal; but must lay up for yourselves a treasure in heaven, where rust and moth do not corrupt, and thieves do not break through and steal: (Matt. vi. 19, 20:) that you must seek first the kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof; (Matt. vi. 23;) and not labour for the food that perisheth, but for the food that endureth to everlasting life, which Christ would have given you; (John vi. 27;) that if you be risen with Christ, you must seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God, and not the things that are on earth; (Col. iii. 1—3;) yea, your very conversation should be in heaven. (Phil. iii. 19—21.)

What say you? Did not God tell you all this and much more, and plainly tell it you? Turn to your Bibles and see the words, and let them witness against you.

2. And could you think with any reason that your souls being so much more precious than your bodies, you should yet do so much more for your bodies than your souls? Could you think all the labours of your lives little enough for a frail body that must lie shortly in the dirt, and that your immortal souls should be no more regarded? Could you think, with any reason that

your souls should do so much for a life of a few years' continuance, and do no more for a life that shall have no end?

3. And whereas you talk of trusting God with your souls, you did not trust him: you did but on that pretence carelessly disregard them. If you trust God, show any word of promise that ever he gave you to trust upon, that ever an impenitent, carnal, careless person shall be saved? No, he hath told you enough to the contrary: and could you think that it was the will of God that you should mind your bodies more than your souls, and this life more than that to come? Why, he hath bid you strive, and run, and fight, and labour, and care, and seek, and use violence, and all diligence, for the safety of your souls, and for the life to come; but where hath he bid you do so for your bodies? No; he knew that you were prone to do too much for them, and therefore he hath bid you "care not, and labour not," that is, do it as if you did it not; and let your care and labour for earthly things be none, in comparison of that for heavenly things. You know God can as well maintain your lives without your care and labour, as save your souls without it: and yet you see he will not, he doth not. You must plough, and sow, and reap, and thrash, for all God's love and care of you, and not say, 'I will let all alone and trust God.' And must you not much more use diligence in much greater things? If you will trust God, you must trust him in his own way, and in the use of his own means.

The fourth excuse: 'I was never brought up to learning, I cannot so much as read; nor did my parents ever teach me any of these things, but only set me about my worldly business, and provide food and raiment for me, but never once told me that I had a soul to save or lose, and an everlasting life to provide and prepare for, and therefore I could not come to the knowledge of them.'

Ans. The greater is their sin who thus neglected you: but this is no sufficient excuse for you. Heaven is not prepared for the learned only; nor will Christ ask you at judgment whether you are good scholars, or not; no, nor so much as whether you could write or read. But, consider well, was not God's word so plainly written that the unlearned might understand it? Did he not put it into the most familiar style, though he knew it would be offensive so the proud scholars of the world, on purpose that he might fit it to the capacities of the ignorant? And if you could not read, yet tell me, could you not have learned to read

at twenty or thirty years of age, if you had been but willing to bestow now and then an hour to that end; or, at least, did you not live near some that could read; and could you not have procured them to read to you, or to help you; and did you not hear these things read to you in the congregation by the minister, or might have done if you would; and if your parents did neglect you in your youth, yet when you came to a fuller use of reason, and heard of the matters of salvation from God's word, did it not concern you to have looked to yourselves, and to have redeemed that time which you lost in your youth, by doubling your diligence when you came to riper years? The apostles gathered churches among heathens who never heard of Christ before, and converted many thousand souls who were never once told of a Saviour, or the way to salvation, till they had passed a greater part of their lives. If you loitered till the latter part of the day, it behoved you then to have bestirred yourselves the more; and not to say, 'Through the fault of my parents I lost the beginning of my life, and therefore I will lose all; they taught me not then, and therefore I will not learn now.' Have you not seen some of your neighbours who were as ill educated as yourselves attain to much knowledge afterwards by their industry; and why might not you have done so if you had been as industrious as they? may not God and conscience witness that it was because you cared not for knowledge, and would not be at pains to get it, that you knew no more? Speak truth, man, in the presence of thy Judge! Was thy heart and mind set upon it? Didst thou pray daily for it to God? Didst thou use all the means thou couldst to get it? Didst thou attend diligently on the word in public, and think of what thou heardest, when thou camest home? Didst thou go to the minister, or to others that could teach thee, and entreat them to tell thee the way to salvation? Or didst thou not rather carelessly neglect these matters, and hear a sermon as a common tale, even when the minister was speaking of heaven or of hell? It was not, then, thine unavoidable ignorance, but thy negligence.

Yea, further, answer as in the presence of God: didst thou obey so far as thou didst know? Or, didst thou not rather sin against that knowledge which thou hadst? Thou knewest that the soul was better than the body, and everlasting life more to be regarded than this transitory life, but didst thou regard it accordingly? Thou, sure, knewest that God was better than the

world, and heaven than earth; at least, thou wast told of it; but didst thou accordingly value him, and love him more? Thou knewest, sure, that there was no salvation without faith, and repentance, and newness of life, and yet they were neglected. In a word, many a thousand sins which were committed, and duties that were omitted, against thy own knowledge and conscience, will mar this excuse.

The fifth excuse: 'I lived not under a powerful minister to tell me of these things, but where there was no preaching at all.'

Answ. And might you not have gone where a powerful minister was, with a little pains? Yea, did not the very plain word that you heard read tell you of these things; and might you not have had a Bible yourselves, and found them there?

The sixth excuse: 'I was a servant, and had no time from my labour to mind these matters: I lived with an hard master, that required all his own work of me, but would allow me no time for the service of God.' Or else, 'I was a poor man, and had a great charge to look after, and with my hard labour had much ado to live, so that I had no time for heavenly things.'

Answ. 1. Who should be first served, God or man? What should be first sought after, heaven or earth? Did not Christ tell thee, "One thing is necessary?" (Luke x. 41, 42.) Was it not as needful to see that you escape damnation, and get safe to heaven when this life ended, as to see that you had food and raiment for yourselves and yours?

2. Did you spend no time in recreation, nor idleness, nor vain talking? Why might not that, at least, have been spent about heavenly things?

3. Could you have taken no time from your rest or eating, or at other intermissions? Man's body will not endure so great labours as have no intermission: and why then might not godliness have been your ease and recreation?

4. Or might you not have minded these things, even when you were about your labour, if you had but a heart to them?

5. At least you might have spent the Lord's own day in hearing, reading, and pondering of these matters, when you were forced to forbear your worldly labours, even by the wholesome law of the land. These, therefore, are all but vain excuses; and God will shortly make thee speak out, and plainly confess, it was not so much for want of time, or helps, or warning, as for want of a heart to use them well. I should have found some time,

though it had been when I should have slept, if my heart had been but set upon it.

The seventh excuse: 'Little did I think to have seen this day. I did not believe that ever God would be so severe. I thought his threatenings had been but to keep men in awe; and I suspected either that the Scripture was not his word, or else I thought he would be better than his word. I thought all that I heard of another life had been uncertain, and therefore was loth to let go a certainty for an uncertainty, and lose my present pleasures which I had in hand for the hopes of that which I never did see.'

Ans. He that will not know his misery by believing to prevent it, shall know it by feeling to endure it. You were told, and told again, what your unbelief would bring you to. Did God's word make heaven and earth? Doth it support and secure them? And is not his word sufficient security for you to have trusted your souls upon? Did you know where was any better security to be had, and where was any surer ground for your confidence? And did you think so basely and blasphemously of God, that he would falsify his word, lest such as you should suffer, and that he was fain to rule the world by a lie? Did God make the world so easily? And can he not govern it by true and righteous means? What need God to say that which he will not do to awe sinners? Can he not awe them by truth? Is it not just that those should eternally perish who will entertain such desperate thoughts of God, and then, by such wicked imaginations, encourage themselves in sin against him?

And for the truth of Scripture, God did not bid you believe it without evidence. He stamped on it the image of his own purity and perfection, that you might know it by that image and superscription, if you had eyes to see them. He sealed it by uncontrolled multitudes of miracles. He delivered it down to your hands by infallible witnesses, so that he left you no room for rational doubting.

And you knew that the matters of this world were not only uncertain, but certainly vain and transitory, and would shortly come to nothing, and leave you in distress. If it had been uncertain whether there were a glory and misery hereafter, (as it was not) should not reason have taught you to prefer the least probabilities of an everlasting unspeakable happiness before that which is certainly perishing and vain? These excuses will but condemn you.

The eighth excuse : ' I was so enticed and persuaded by sinners to do as they did, that I could not deny them : they would never let me rest.'

And were you not as earnestly persuaded by God to forsake sin, and serve him, and yet that would not prevail with you ? You could not deny the devils and fools, but you could deny God and all his messengers. Were not ministers as earnest with you every week to repent and amend ? What did men entice you with ? With a little deluding fleshly pleasure for a few days ? And what did God entice you with ? With the promise of endless, inconceivable felicity ! And if this were a smaller matter in your eyes than the other, then you have had your choice, be content with it, and thank yourselves. In your lifetime you had the good things which you chose, and preferred before heaven, and therefore cannot expect to have heaven besides.

The ninth excuse : ' I lived among ungodly persons, who derided all that feared God ; so that if I had not done as they did, but had made any more ado to be saved, I should have been the very scorn of the place where I lived.'

Answ. And was not heaven worth the enduring of a scorn ? Is he not worthy to go without it who thinks so basely of it ? Did not Christ tell you that if you were ashamed of him before men, he would be ashamed of you before his Father and the angels of heaven ? (Mark viii. 38.) He suffered more than scorns for you ; and could not you suffer a scorn for him and yourselves ? Seeing you chose rather to endure everlasting torment, than a little derision from ignorant men, take that which you made choice of : and seeing so small a matter would drive you from heaven, and part God and you as a mock, as the wind of a man's mouth, no wonder if you be commanded to depart from him into everlasting fire.

The tenth excuse : ' I had ungodly persons to my parents, or masters, or landlord, or governors, who threatened to undo me if I had addicted myself to so strict a life, and if I would not believe and do as they did.'

Answ. What if they threatened you with present death ? Did not God also threaten you with everlasting death if you were not ruled by him ? And whose threatening should you have chiefly feared ? Is man more dreadful than God ? Is death more terrible than hell ? Did not Christ bid you " fear

not them that can kill the body, and after that can do no more; but fear him that is able to destroy both body and soul in hell-fire? yea, I say unto you, fear him." (Matt. x. 28; Luke xii. 4, 5.) "Fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be afraid of their revilings: for the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool, but my righteousness shall be for ever, and my salvation from generation to generation." (Isaiah li. 7.) Seeing, therefore, you have chosen rather to suffer from God for ever for your sin, than to suffer small matters for well-doing for a moment, you must ever bear your own choice. Christ told you beforehand, that if you could not forsake all the world, and your own lives, for him, you could not be his disciples. (Matt. x. 37—39.) And seeing you thought his terms too hard, and would needs seek you out a better service, even take what you have chosen and found.

The eleventh excuse: 'I saw so many follow their pleasure and their worldly business, and never look after these higher things, and so few go the other way, that I thought sure God would not damn so great a part of the world, and therefore I ventured to do as the most did.'

Ans. God will make good his word upon many or few. Did you doubt of his will, or of his power? For his will—he hath told it you in his word; for his power—he is as able to punish many as one man. What is all the world to him, but as a drop of a bucket, as the dust of the balance? He told you beforehand that the gate was strait, and the way to heaven was narrow, and few did find it; and the gate to destruction was wide, and the way was broad, and many did enter in at it. (Matt. vii. 13, 14.) And if you would not believe him, you must bear what your unbelief hath brought you to. What if you had twenty children, or servants, or friends, and the greater part of them should prove false to you, and seek your destruction, or prove disobedient, and turn to your enemy, would you think it a good excuse if the rest should do the like because of their example? Will you therefore wrong God because you see others wrong him? Would you smite in the face of your own father, if you saw others do so? God warned you that you should not follow a multitude to do evil. (Exod. xxiii. 2.) And if yet you will do as most do, you must even speed as most speed. You should not so much consider who they be as what they do, and whither they go, and who they forsake, and what

they lose, and what strength is in the reasons that move them to do this : and then you would find it is God they forsake, it is sin they choose ; it is heaven they lose, it is hell they run into ; and it is no true reason, but Satan's delusion, and sensual inclinations that lead them to it : and should they be imitated, be they many, or be they few, in such a course as this ?

The twelfth excuse : ' I saw so many faults in those that were accounted godly, and saw so much division among them, that I thought they were as bad as others ; and among so many opinions I knew not what religion to be of.'

Ans. 1. A spot is soonest seen in the fairest cloth ; and the malicious world useth to make such far worse than they are.

2. But suppose all were true that malice saith of some, you could not say the like by others.

3. Or, if you could, yet it was God's law, and not men's faults, that was made the rule for you to live by : will it excuse you that others are bad ?

4. And from their diverse opinions you should have taken counsel at God's word, which was right. Did you first search the Scripture impartially, as willing to know the truth, that you might obey it ? And did you pray daily that God would lead you into truth ? And did you obey as much as you knew ? Did you join with the godly so far as they are all agreed ? They are all agreed in the fundamental articles of Christianity, and in all things absolutely necessary to a holy life, and to salvation ; that all known sin is to be forsaken, and all known duty to be done. Why did you not so far, then, agree with them ? Alas ! the imperfections of the godly, and the false accusations of the malicious world, will prove but a poor cover for your wilful ungodliness, and Christ will convince you of the vanity of these excuses.

The thirteenth excuse : ' The Scriptures were so dark that I could not understand them. And I saw the wisest men differ so much in the exposition of them, that I thought it was in vain for me to trouble myself about them. If God would have had us live according to the Scriptures, he would sure have written them plainly, that men might understand them.'

Ans. 1. It is all plainly written according to the nature of the subject, but a prejudiced, disaffected, yea, or but untaught, disused soul, cannot at first understand the plainest teaching. The plainest Greek or Hebrew grammar that can be written,

will be utterly obscure to him who has but newly entered the English school, yea, after many years' time that he spends in learning. Did you study hard, and pray for God's teaching, and inquire of others, and wait patiently in Christ's school, that you might come to further knowledge by degrees? And were you willing to know even those truths that called you out to self-denial, and that did put you on the hardest flesh-displeasing duties? Had you done thus, you would have admired the light of the holy Scripture, and now have rejoiced that ever you saw them, and not have quarrelled at its seeming darkness. This word might have made you wise to salvation, as it hath done others. (Acts xx. 32; 2 Tim. iii. 15—17.) "This law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes." (Psalm xix. 7, 8.)

2. So much as is of necessity to salvation, is as plain as you could desire. Yet if you be judged by these, you will be condemned, for you did not obey that which was most plain. What darkness is in such words as these, "Except ye repent, ye shall all perish." (Luke xiii. 3, 5.) "Love not the world, nor the things in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." (1 John ii. 15.) "He that will come after me, let him deny himself," &c. (Matt. xvi. 24.)

3. If there had been nothing that seemed difficult to you, would you not have despised its simplicity, and have thought yourselves wise enough at the first reading, and needed no more?

The fourteenth excuse: 'There were so many seeming contradictions in the Scripture, and so many strange improbable things, that I could not believe it.'

Ans. 1. The contradictions were in your fancy, that did not understand the word which you read. Must the raw, inexperienced learner despise his book or teacher as oft as in his ignorance he thinks he meets with contradictions? Did you think God was no wiser than you, and understood not himself, because you understood him not? Nor could reconcile his own words, because you could not reconcile them? You would needs be a judge of the law, instead of obeying it, and speak evil of it, rather than do it. (James iv. 11.)

2. And these things which you called improbable in the word, were the wonders of God, of purpose to confirm it. If it had not been confirmed by wonders, you would have thought

it unproved, and yet now it is so confirmed, you will not believe the doctrine, because the witness seems incredible. And that is, because they are matters above the power of man, as if they were therefore above the power of God. You shall at last have your eyes so far opened, as to see those seeming contradictions reconciled, and the certainty of those things which you accounted improbable; that you may be forced to confess the folly of your arrogancy and unbelief; and then God will judge you in righteousness, who presumed unrighteously to judge him and his word.

The fifteenth excuse: 'It seemed so unlikely a thing to me, that the merciful God should damn most of the world to everlasting fire, that I could not believe it.'

Answ. 1. And did it not seem as unlikely to you that his word should be false?

2. Should it not have seemed as unlikely that the Governor of the world should be unjust, and suffer his law to be unexecuted, and the worst to speed as well as the best; and to suffer vile sinful dust to despise his mercy, and abuse his patience, and turn all his creatures against him without due punishment?

3. Did you not feel pain and misery begin in this life?

4. You saw toads and serpents which had never sinned, and you would rather live in any tolerable suffering than to be a toad. And is it not reason that it should go worse with contemptuous sinners, than with those creatures that never sinned?

5. Could you expect that those should come to heaven that would not believe there was such a state, but refused it, and preferred the world before it? And to be out of heaven is to be out of all happiness; and he that is so out of all happiness, and knows that he lost it by his own folly, must needs torment himself with such considerations, were there no other torments: and as man is capable of greater felicity than brutes, so must he needs be capable of more misery.

The sixteenth excuse: 'The things which God promised in heaven, and threatened in hell, were all out of my sight, and therefore I could not heartily believe them. Had I but once seen them, or spoke with one that had seen them, I should have been satisfied, and have contemned the things of the world.'

Answ. Will you not believe till you see or feel? Was not God's word sufficient evidence? Would you have believed one from the dead that had told you he had seen such things. And would you not believe Stephen that saw them? (Acts i.

56.) Or Paul, that heard and saw them? (2 Cor. xii. 3, 4.) Nor Christ, that came purposely from heaven to reveal them? Why, flesh and blood cannot see them. You see not God, will you not therefore believe that there is a God? Indeed, whatever you imagine, if you would not believe Moses and the prophets, Christ and his apostles, neither would you have believed though one had risen from the dead, for God's word is more credible than a dead man's, and Christ did rise from the dead to attest it. Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet believed. Noah saw no rain when he was preparing the ark, but because he believed, he made ready and escaped, (Heb. xi. 7,) when the world, that would not believe, did perish. But seeing God's word was of no more weight with you, and no knowledge would serve your turn but by seeing and feeling, you shall see and feel everlastingly to your sorrow.

The seventeenth excuse: 'It was so strict a law that God would have ruled me by, and the way to heaven was so strait and difficult, that I could not endure it. I was not able to deny my flesh, and live such a life.'

Answ. 1. You are not able because you are not willing. What was there but your own wicked hearts that should make such a life seem grievous to you? Every thing is hard and grievous to him who loathes it, and whose heart is against it. The chief thing that God called you to was to love him, and make him your delight, and are love and delight such grievous things? It was not grievous to you to love your meat, or drink, or money. It was no hard matter to you to love a friend that loved you, no, nor to love your sin which was your enemy, and what should make it seem hard to love God but a wicked heart? Is not he better and more lovely than all these? And had you but loved him, all the rest of his service would have seemed easy to you. To think of him, to speak of him, to pray to him, to praise him, yea, to deny all and suffer for him, would have been sweet and pleasant to you, so far as you had loved him. It was not God, therefore, but your own naughty hearts that made his work seem grievous to you, and the way to heaven seem hard. He told you truly that his yoke was easy, and his burthen light, and his commandments were not grievous. (Matt. xi. 29; 1 John v. 3.) They that tried them found them the very joy and delight of their souls, and why could not you do so?

2. But what if the way to heaven had been harder than it

was? Was not heaven worth your labour? Were you afraid of being a loser by it? Could not God requite your labour or sufferings? Doth any repent when they come to heaven that it cost them so dear to come thither? And is not hell worse than the hardest way to heaven? Seeing you have chosen hell to save you labour and suffering in this life, you must have your choice. And seeing you thought not everlasting life to be worth so much as God required, that is, the accepting thankfully, and minding and seeking, and preferring it before this life, you have none to blame for the loss of it but yourselves.

The eighteenth excuse: 'It was God that made me of a sensual nature. He gave me an appetite to meat, and drink, and ease, and lust. He gave me that flesh which ruled me, how then can he condemn me for living according to the nature which he gave me?'

Ans. He gave that appetite to be exercised moderately under the rule of reason, for the preservation and propagation of mankind. But did he not also give you reason to govern that appetite? And the revelation of his will to guide that reason? He gave you your flesh to be a servant, and not a master. Your beast hath fleshly appetite without reason, and therefore God hath put him under you who have reason, that you should rule him. Will you let your beast do what he list, and madly run upon whom you list, and say, you do but let him live according to his nature, which God hath given him? Why, God that gave him such nature, did intend him to be ruled by a higher nature, even by the reason which he gave to you, and so he did also by your flesh and sensual appetite.

The nineteenth excuse: 'But I lived among so many baits which enticed this flesh, that I could not resist them. My meat was a snare to me, my drink a snare, my clothes, my house, my land a snare, every beauty that I saw was a snare. And the better all these were, the stronger was my snare. If God would not have had my heart ensnared and drawn from him, he should not have put so many baits in my way. Yea, and they were so near to me, and daily with me, that though I was resolved to forbear them before, yet when they were brought to my hand, I could not forbear.'

Ans. 1. Is this the thanks that God hath for his mercies? He sent you all these as favours from his own hand. He wrote his own name upon them, that in them you might see his power, and wisdom, and goodness, and so be led up to the consideration

of him, that you might fall in love with himself, who was the fountain, the life, the end of all. And do you overlook God in the creature, and live as without him in the world, and doat upon that which should have drawn you to himself, and then lay the blame on God? If he send a suitor to speak to you in his name, and write you a love-letter with his own hand, will you fall in love with the messenger of the letter, and neglect the sender, and then blame him that wrote his letter on so fair a paper, or in so neat a hand, or that sent it by such a comely messenger? Certainly those excuses are too gross to take with the wise and righteous God, or to seem sufficient to a well-informed conscience.

2. And whereas you speak of the power of these objects, was there not much more in God, in Christ, in the promised glory, to have drawn your heart another way? Why, then, did not these take as much with you as the other? You could not choose, forsooth, but be enticed with such baits as were fitted to your sensual appetite, and such things as a dog or a swine may enjoy as well as a man, but you could choose when Christ and glory were offered you. Yea, you did choose to refuse the offer, and tread them under feet by your neglect. When Satan set your cups, and your harlots, and your profits before you, on one side, did not God set his favour and everlasting happiness on the other side? And was it wise or equal dealing to prefer your lusts before that glory?

3. Moreover, it was not in the power of any of those baits to force your will, or to necessitate you to choose them. They could be but baits to entice you, and it was still in your own choice whether you would yield to the enticement, and choose them or not. Shall every man be false to God that hath any bait to entice him from him? Will you excuse your child or friend if he would be false to you upon as great enticements as these? If a cup of drink, or a whore, or a little gain, could draw him more than all your love and interest, I do not think you would hold him excused.

And whereas you speak of the nearness and continuance of these allurements, I would fain know was not God as near you, and continually near you, to draw you to himself? Faith might have seen him, though flesh and blood cannot. Did he not stand by you when you were in your cups and lustful pleasures? Did he not tell you of the danger, and offer you far better things, if you would obey him and despise those baits? But you would

hearken to none of this ; you should have remembered that he stood over you, and was looking on you, and you should have said, as Joseph, " How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God ?" (Gen. xxxix. 9.) You had also Scripture near you, and reason near you, and conscience near you, as well as the bait was near you, and therefore this is a vain excuse.

The twentieth excuse : ' It was God that let loose the devil to tempt me, and he was too subtle for me to deal with, and therefore what wonder if I sinned, and were overcome ?'

Answ. 1. He did not let loose the devil to constrain you to sin. He could but entice, and you might choose whether you would yield. The devil could neither make you sin against your will, nor yet necessitate you to be willing.

2. You were a sure friend to Christ that while, that would forsake him as oft as you were tempted by the devil. Is that a friend or a servant worthy to be regarded, that will disobey you, or betray you, as oft as he is tempted to it ?

3. Will you excuse your servant if he leave your work undone, and follow cards or dice, or the alehouse, and say, ' I was tempted to it by one that was cunninger than I ?' Shall every murderer or thief escape hanging because the devil was too cunning for him in his temptations ? Would you have the jury or the judge to take this for a good excuse ?

4. And why did you not hearken to God, that enticed you the other way ? You forgot what helps he afforded you to discover the wiles of Satan, and to vanquish the temptation. He told you it was an enemy that tempted you, and would you hearken to an enemy ? He told you it was a dream, a shadow, a painted pleasure, a gilded carcass, a lying promise, and deceitful vanity, by which you were tempted, and yet would you regard it before your God ? He told you that it was your God, your Saviour, your hope, your everlasting happiness that the tempter would beguile you of, and yet would you be beguiled ? He told you, and plainly, and often told you, that the tempter would lead you to eternal fire, and undo you everlastingly before you were aware, and that a fatal hook was covered with that bait, and yet would you swallow it ?

5. It is plain by all this that it was not your natural weakness of faculties that caused you to be overcome by the subtleties of the devil, as a silly child is deceived by a crafty fellow that overwits him. But it was your careless inconsiderateness, your sensual inclinations, and vicious disposition that drew you to a

wilful obeying of the tempter, and rejecting the wholesome advice of Christ. This, therefore, is a frivolous excuse of your sin.

The one-and-twentieth excuse: 'But I hope you will not say that all men have free will, and if my will were not free, how could I choose but sin?'

Answ. 1. Your will was not free from God's rule and government; 2. Nor was it free from its natural inclination to good in general; for either of these were more properly slavery. 3. Nor was it free from the influence of a dark understanding. 4. Nor free from its own contracted, vicious inclination. 5. Nor freed from the temptations of the flesh, the world, and the devil.

But it was, 1. Free from any natural determination to evil, or to any thing that was doubtful. 2. And free from the co-action or violence of any. 3. And free from an irresistible determination of any exterior cause, at least ordinarily. So that naturally, as men, you have the power or faculty of determining your own wills, of ruling your inferior faculties in a great measure, yea, of ruling the senses and the fantasy itself, which doth so much to dispose of our understanding. And if your wills, which are naturally free, are yet so habitually vicious that they incline you to do evil, that is not an excuse, but an aggravation of your sin. But of this more under the next.

The two-and-twentieth excuse: 'But I have not power of myself to any thing that is good. What can the creature do? Without Christ, we can do nothing. It is God that must give me ability, or I can have none, and if he had given it me, I had not been an unbeliever or impenitent. I can no more believe of myself, than I can fulfil the law of myself.'

Answ. 1. These are the vain cavils of learned folly, which God will easily answer in a word. The word "power" is taken in several senses. Sometimes, and most commonly and fitly, for a faculty or a strength by which a man can do his duty if he will. This physical power you have, and the worst of sinners have, while they are men on earth. Were they actually willing, they might acceptably perform sincere obedience, and were they dispositively willing, they might actually believe and will. And thus the ungodly have power to believe.

Sometimes the word "power" is taken for authority or leave, for legal or civil power. And thus you have all not only power or liberty to believe, but also a command which makes it your duty, and a threatening adjoined, which will condemn you if you do not.

Sometimes the word "power" is taken ethically and less properly, for a disposition, inclination, habit, or freedom from the contrary habit or disposition. And in this sense it is true that none but the effectually called have a power to believe. But then observe, 1. That this is but a moral less proper, and not a physical proper impotency, and therefore Austin chooseth rather to say that all men have power to believe, but all have not a will, or faith itself, because we use to difference power from willingness, and willingness actuateth the power which we had before. And therefore our divines choose rather to call grace a habit, when they speak exactly, than a power; and Dr. Twiss derides the Arminians for talking of a power subjected in a power. 2. Note, that this impotency is but the same thing with your unwillingness, and wilful blindness in another word. 3. Note, that this impotency is along of yourselves as to the original, and much more as to the not curing, or removing of it. Hath God given you no means towards the cure of this disability, which you have neglected? 4. Note, that this impotency is no just excuse, but an aggravation of your sin. If you were willing to be the servant of Christ, and yet were not able, either because he would not accept you, or because of a want of natural faculties, or because of some other natural difficulty which the willingest mind could not overcome, this were some excuse, but to be habitually wilful in refusing grace, is worse than to be merely, actually unwilling. If a man have so accustomed himself to murder, drunkenness, stealing, or the like wickedness, so far that he cannot leave it, will you therefore forgive him? Or will any judge or jury hold him excused? Or rather think him the more unfit for mercy? 5. Note, also, that the want of a supernatural habit, no, nor the presence of the contrary habit, do not efficiently determine the will to particular acts, much less take away its natural freedom. 6. And that till habits attain an utter predominancy, (at least) there is a power remaining in the will to resist them, and use means against them, though eventually the perverse inclination may hinder the use of it.

The three-and-twentieth excuse: 'I have heard from learned men that God doth determine all actions, natural and free, as the first efficient physical immediate cause, or else nothing could act. And then it was not along of me that I chose forbidden objects; but of him that irresistibly moved me thereto, and whose instrument I was.'

Answ. This is a trick of that wisdom which is foolishness with God, and to be deceived by vain philosophy.

1. The very principle itself is most likely to be false, and those that tell you this do err. Much more, I think, may be said against it than for it.

2. I am sure it is either false or reconcilable with God's holiness, and man's liberty and culpability; so that it is a mad thing to deceive yourselves with such philosophical uncertainties, when the truth which you oppose by it is infallibly certain. That God is not the author of sin, but man himself, who is justly condemned for it, is undoubtedly true, and would you obscure so clear a truth by searching into points beyond human reach, if not unsound, as you conclude them.

The four-and-twentieth excuse: 'But at least those learned divines among us that doubt of this, do yet say that the will is necessarily and infallibly determined by the practical understanding, and that is as much irresistibly necessitated by objects, and therefore whatever act was done by my understanding or will, was thus necessitated, and I could not help it. They say, liberty is but the acting of the faculty agreeably to its nature, and it was God, as Creator, that gave Adam his faculties, and God, by providential dispose, that presented all objects to him, by which his understanding, and so his will, were unavoidably necessitated.'

Answ. This is of the same nature with the former, uncertain, if not certainly false. Were this true, for ought we can see, it would lay all the sin and misery of this world on God, as the irresistible necessitating cause, which because we know infallibly to be false, we have no reason to take such principles to be true which infer it. The understanding doth not, by a necessary efficiency, determine the will, but morally, or rather, is regularly a condition, or necessary antecedent, without which it may not determine itself. Yea, the will, by commanding the sense and fantasy, doth much to determine the understanding. As the eye is not necessary to my going, but to my going right, so is not the understanding's guidance necessary to my willing, (there the simple apprehension may suffice,) but to my right willing. There are other ways of determining the will. Or, if the understanding did determine the will, efficiently and necessarily, it is not every act of the understanding that must do it. If it be so when it saith, This *must* be done, and saith importunately, yet not when it only saith, This may be done, or you

may venture on it, which is the common part which it hath in sin.

I am not pleased that these curious objections fall in the way, nor do I delight to put them into vulgar heads; but finding many young scholars, and others that have conversed with them, assaulted with these temptations, I thought meet to give a touch, and but a touch, to take them out of their way, as Mr. Fenner hath done more fully in the preface to his *Hidden Manna*, on this last point, to which I refer you. I only add this :

The will of man in its very dominion doth bear God's image. It is a self-determining power, though it be biassed by habits, and needs a guide. As the heart and vital spirits by which it acteth are to the rest of the body, so is it to the soul. The light of nature hath taught all the world to carry the guilt of every crime to the will of man, and there to leave it. Upon this all laws and judgments are grounded. From ignorance and intellectual weakness, men commonly fetch excuses for their faults, but from the will they are aggravated. If we think it strange that man's will should be the first cause, so much as of a sinful mode, and answer all occurring objections, it may suffice that we are certain the Holy Majesty is not the author of sin, and he is able to make all this as plain as the sun, and easily answer all these vain excuses, though we should be unable: and if we be much ignorant of the frame and motions of our own souls, and especially of that high, self-determining principle, free will, the great spring of our actions, and the curious engine by which God doth sapiently govern the world, it is no wonder, considering that the soul can know itself but by reflection, and God gave us a soul to use, rather than to know itself, and to know its qualities and operations, rather than its essence.

The five-and-twentieth excuse: 'No man can be saved, nor avoid any sin, nor believe in Christ, but those whom God hath predestinated thereto. I was under an irreversible sentence before I was born, and therefore I do nothing but what I was predestinated to do, and if God decreed not to save me, how could I help it?'

Ans. 1. God's judgments are more plain, but his decrees or secret purposes are mysterious, and to darken certainties by having recourse to points obscure, is no part of Christian wisdom. God told you your duty in his word, and on what terms you

must be judged to life or death ; hither should you have recourse for direction, and not to the unsearchable mysteries of his mind.

2. God decreeth not to condemn any but for sin. Sin, I say, is the cause of that condemnation, though not of his decree.

3. God's decrees are acts immanent in himself, and make no change on you, and therefore do not necessitate you to sin, any more than his foreknowledge doth. For both cause only a necessity of consequence which is logical, as the divines on both sides do confess. And therefore this no more caused you to sin, than if there had been no such decree. And it is a doubt whether that decree be not negative, a willing suspending of the divine will, as to evil, or at most a purpose to permit it.

The six-and-twentieth excuse : ' If it be no more, yet doth it make my perdition unavoidable, for even God's foreknowledge doth so ; for if he foreknow it, all the world cannot hinder it from coming to pass.'

Ans. Must God either be ignorant of what you will do, or else be the cause of it ? You foreknow that the sun will rise to-morrow, that doth not cause it to rise. If you foreknow that one man will murder another, you are not the cause of it by foreknowing it. So is it here.

The seven-and-twentieth excuse : ' God might have hindered my sin and damnation if he would.'

Ans. And will you wilfully sin, and think to escape, because God doth not hinder you ? The prince that makes a law against the murder, could lock you up, and keep you from being a murderer. But are you excusable if he do not ? We are certain that God could have hindered all the sin, and death, and confusion, and misery that is in the world, and we are as certain that he doth not hinder it but by forbidding it, and giving men means against it, and we are certain that he is just, and good, and wise in all, and not bound to hinder it, and what his reasons are you may better know hereafter. In the mean time, you had better have looked to your own duty.

The eight-and-twentieth excuse : ' How could I be saved if Christ did not die for me ? He died but for his elect, and none could be saved without his death.'

Ans. He did die for you, and for more than his elect, though he absolutely purposed only their salvation. Your sins crucified him, and your debt lay upon him, and he so far ransomed you, that nothing but your wilful refusal of the benefits could have condemned you.

The nine-and-twentieth excuse : ' It was Adam's sin that brought me into this depravedness of will, which I can neither cure, nor could prevent.'

Answ. 1. If Adam cast away his holiness, he could no more convey that to us which he cast away, than a nobleman that is a traitor can convey his lost inheritance or honours to his son.

2. You perish, not only for your original sin, but for rejecting the recovering mercy of the Redeemer. You might have had Christ and life in him for the accepting.

The thirtieth excuse : ' God will require no more than he gives. He gave me not grace to repent and believe, and without his gift I could not have it.'

Answ. 1. God will justly require more than he giveth, that is, the improvement of his gifts, as Matt. xxv. shows. He gave Adam but a power to persevere, and not actual perseverance, yet did he justly punish him for want of the act, even for not using by his own will the power which he had given him.

2. It is along of yourself if God did not give you grace to believe; it was because you wilfully refused some preparatory grace. Christ found you at a great distance from him, and he gave you grace sufficient to have brought you nearer to him than you were; you had grace sufficient to have made you better than you were, and restrained many sins, and brought you to the means, when you turned your back on them. Though this were not sufficient to cause you to believe, it was sufficient to have brought you nearer to believing, and through your own wilfulness became not effectual; even as Adam had sufficient grace to have stood, which was not effectual. So that you had not only Christ offered to you, if you would but accept him, but you had daily and precious helps and means to have cured your wills, and caused you to accept him, for neglect of which, and so for not believing, and so for all your other sins, you justly perish.

The one-and-thirtieth excuse : ' Alas ! man is a worm, a dry leaf, (Job xiii. 25,) a silly, foolish creature, and therefore his actions be not regardable, nor deserve so great a punishment.'

Answ. Though he be a worm, and as nothing to God, and foolish by sin, yet he is naturally so noble a creature, that the image of God was on him; (Gen. xii. 26. and v. i; James iii. 9;) and the world made his servants, and angels his attendants. (Heb. i. 14.) So noble, that Christ died for him, God takes special care of him; he is capable of knowing and

enjoying God, and heaven is not thought too good for him if he will obey. And he that is capable of so great good, must be capable of as great evil, and his ways not to be so overlooked by that God that hath undertaken to be his Governor. When it tendeth to infidelity, the devil will teach you to debase man, even lower than God would do.

The two-and-thirtieth excuse: 'Sin is no being; and shall men be damned for that which is nothing?'

Ans. 1. It is such a mode as deformeth God's creature. It is a moral being; it is a relation of our actions and hearts to God's will and law.

2. They that say sin is nothing, say pain and loss are nothing too. You shall, therefore, be paid with one nothing for another. Make light of your misery, and say it is nothing, as you did of your sin.

3. Will you take this for a good excuse from your children or servants if they abuse you? or, from a thief or a murderer? Shall he escape by telling the Judge that his sin was nothing? or, rather have death, which is nothing, as the just reward of it?

The three-and-thirtieth excuse: 'But sin is a transient thing; at least it doth God no harm, and therefore why should he do us so much harm for it?'

Ans. 1. It hurts not God, because he is above hurt. No thanks to you if he be out of your reach.

2. You may wrong him, when you cannot hurt him; and the wrong deserves as much as you can bear. If a traitor endeavour the death of the prince in vain, his endeavour deserves death, though he never hurt him. You despise God's law and authority; you cause the blaspheming of his name; (Rom. ii. 24;) he calls it a pressing him as a cart is pressed with sheaves, (Amos ii. 13,) and a grieving of him.

3. And you wrong his image, his church, the public good, and the souls of others.

The four-and-thirtieth excuse: 'But God's nature is so good and merciful, that sure he will not damn his own creatures.'

Ans. 1. A merciful judge will hang a man for a fault against man; by proportion, then, what is due for sin against God?

2. All the death and calamity which you see in the world, comes from the anger of this merciful God; why, then, may not future misery come from it? -

3. God knoweth his own mercy better than you do ; and he hath told you how far it shall extend.

4. He is infinitely merciful ; but it is to the heirs of mercy, not to the final rejectors of his mercy.

Hath not God been merciful to thee in bearing with thee so long, and offering thee grace in the blood of Christ till thou didst wilfully reject it ? Thou wilt confess, to thy everlasting woe, that God was merciful ; had he not been so merciful, thou wouldst not have been so miserable for rejecting it.

The five-and-thirtieth excuse : ‘ I would not so torment mine enemy myself.’

Ans. No reason you should. Is it all one to wrong you, and to wrong the God of heaven ? God is the only judge of his own wrongs.

The six-and-thirtieth excuse : ‘ All men are sinners, and I was but a sinner.’

Ans. All were not impenitent, unbelieving, rebellious sinners, and therefore all are not unpardoned, condemned sinners. All did not live after the flesh, and refuse to the last to be converted, as you did. God will teach you better to difference between sinners and sinners.

The seven-and-thirtieth excuse : ‘ But if Christ have satisfied for my sins, and died for me, then how can I justly suffer for the same sins ? will God punish one sin twice ?

Ans. 1. Christ suffered for man in the nature of man, but not in your person, nor you in him. It was not you that provided the price, but God himself ; Christ was not man’s delegate in satisfying, and therefore received not his instructions from us, nor did it on our terms, but his own. It was not the same thing which the law threatened that Christ underwent ; for that was the damnation of the sinner himself, and not the suffering of another for him ; it cannot therefore be yours, but on Christ’s own terms. He died for thy sin, but with this intent, that for all that, if thou refuse him, thou shalt die thyself. It is therefore no wrong to thee to die, for it was not thou that diedst before : and Christ will take it for no wrong to him ; for he will judge thee to that death. It is for refusing a Christ that died for thee that thou must perish for ever.

The eight-and-thirtieth excuse : ‘ But I did not refuse Christ : I believed and trusted in him to the last ; and repented for my sins, though I sometimes was overtaken by them.’

Ans. Had this been true, thy sin would not have condemned

thee : but there is no mocking God ; he will show thee then thy naked heart, and convince thousands that thought they believed and repented, that indeed they did not. By thy works, also, will this be discovered, this is, by the main bent and scope of thy life, as Matt. xxv. throughout, and James ii.

The nine-and-thirtieth excuse: ' I did many good works ; and I hope God will set those against my evil works.'

Ans. Thy good works were thy sins, because, indeed, they were not good, being not done in sincerity of heart for God. The best man's works have some infirmity, which nothing can cleanse but the blood of Christ, which thou hast made light of, and therefore hast no part in. If all thy life had been spent in perfect works except one day, they would not make satisfaction for the sins of that day, for they are but part of thy duty. Wo to him that hath no better a Saviour at judgment than his own good works !

The fortieth excuse : ' I have lived in poverty and misery on earth, and therefore I hope I have had my suffering here, and shall not suffer in this world and another too.'

Ans. 1. By that rule all poor men, and murderers, and thieves that are tormented and hanged, should be saved. But as godliness hath the promise of this life and that to come, so impenitency and wickedness hath the threatening of this life and that to come.

2. The devils and the damned have suffered much more than you already, and yet they are never the nearer a deliverance. When thou hast suffered ten thousand years, thy pain will be never the nearer an end. How, then, can a little misery on earth prevent it? Alas ! poor soul, these are but the foretastes and beginnings of thy sorrow. Nothing but pardon through the blood of Christ could have prevented thy condemnation ; and that thou rejectest by infidelity and impenitency. His sufferings would have saved thee if thou hadst not refused him, but all thy own sufferings will yield thee no relief.

So much for the answering of the vain excuses which poor sinners are ready to make for themselves, wherein I have been so large, as that this part, I confess, is disproportionable to the rest : but it was for these two reasons.

1. That poor careless souls might see the vanity of such defences : and consider, if such a worm as I can easily confute them, how easily and how terribly will they be all answered by their Judge !

2. I did it the rather, that godly Christians might the better understand how to deal with these vain excuses when they meet with them, which will be daily, if they deal with men in this sad condition.

X. We have done with that part of the judgment which consisteth in the exploration or trial of the cause. We now come to that which is the conclusion and consummation of all; and that is, to show you what the sentence will be, and on whom.

And for this we must go straight to the word of God for our light, it being impossible for any man to have any particular knowledge of it, if Christ had not there revealed it unto us. Indeed, almost all the world do acknowledge a life after this, where it shall go well with the good, and ill with the bad. But who shall be then accounted righteous, and who unrighteous, and on what terms and grounds, by whom they shall be judged, and to what condition, they know not.

The sentence in judgment will be, 1. Either on those that never had means to know Christ; 2. Or on those that had.

1. For the former, as it less concerneth us to inquire of their case, so it is more obscurely revealed to us in the Scripture. It is certain that they shall be judged according to their use of the means which they had, (Rom. ii. 11—16,) and the talents which they received. (Matt. xxv.) But that it falleth out that he that hath but the one talent of natural helps doth improve it to salvation; or that ever they, who knew not Christ, are justified and saved without that knowledge, (being at age and use of reason,) I find not in the Scriptures. I find, indeed, that as many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law, shall be judged by the law. (Rom. ii. 12.) But not that any that are justified by the works of nature, such as are here said to be without law. I find also that "they have the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing, or else excusing, one another, in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to the gospel." (Rom. ii. 15, 16.) And I believe it is a just excuse, and not an unjust, which is here meant. But it will be but an excuse so far as they were guiltless; and that will be but *in tanto*, and not *in toto*, in part only, and so not a full justification. A heathen's conscience may excuse him from those sins which he was never guilty of, but not from all. But no more of them.

2. The case of those who have had the gospel is more plainly opened to us in God's word. Their sentence is opened in many places of Scripture, but most fully in Matt. xxv., whence we will now collect it.

There we find that Jesus Christ, the Redeemer, as King of the world, shall sit in judgment on all men at the last, and shall separate them one from another as a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats, and so shall pass the final sentence. This sentence is two-fold, according to the different condition of them that are judged. To them on the right hand there is a sentence of justification, and adjudication to everlasting glory; to them on the left hand there is a sentence of condemnation to everlasting punishment.

The sentence on each of these containeth both the state which they are judged to, and the reason or cause of the judgment to that state: for as God will not judge any to life or death without just cause, so he will publish this cause in his sentence, as it is the manner of judges to do; if you say, 'Christ will not use a voice,' let it satisfy that though we know not the manner, yet if he do it but by mental discovery, as he shows men what shall everlastingly befall them, so he will show them why it shall so befall them.

1. The sentence on them on the right hand will contain, 1. Their justification, and adjudication to blessedness, and that both, as generally denominated, and as particularly determined and described. 2. And the cause of this judgment. 1. In general they shall be pronounced blessed; Satan would have had them cursed and miserable. The law did curse them to misery; many a fearful thought hath possessed their own breasts, lest they should prove at last accursed and miserable: but now they hear the contrary from their Judge. All the promises in the gospel could not perfectly overcome those their fears; all the comfortable words of the ministers of the gospel could not perfectly subdue them; all the tender mercies of God in Christ could not perfectly subdue them; but now they are vanished all for ever. He that once had heard his Redeemer in judgment call him "blessed," will never fear being cursed more; for he that Christ blessed, shall be blessed indeed.

The description of their blessedness followeth, "Come, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:" and also they are called "blessed of the Father." Here is the fountain of their blessedness—the Father, and the state

of their blessedness in being the Father's; for I suppose they are called "the blessed of the Father," both because the Father blessed them, that is, makes them happy, and because these blessed ones are the Father's own: and so Christ will publish it to the world in judgment, that he came to glorify the Father, and will proclaim him the principal efficient, and ultimate end of his work of redemption, and the blessedness of his saints; and that himself is, as Mediator, but the way to the Father. It is the Father that "prepared" the kingdom for them, and "from the foundation of the world" prepared it; both for them, as chosen ones, and for them as future believers and righteous ones. It is called a kingdom, partly in respect to God, the King, in whose glory we shall partake in our places; and partly metaphorically, from the dignity of our condition. For so it is that ourselves are said to be made kings, (Rev. i. 6., and v. 1; 1 Peter ii. 9,) and not that we are properly kings, for then we must have subjects who must be governed by us.

Thus we see their blessedness in the fountain, end, and state of dignity. As to the receptive act on their part, it is expressed by two words; one signifying their first entrance on it—"come," the other their possession—"inherit:" that is, possess it as given by the Father, and redeemed by the Son, and hold it in this tenure for ever.

The true believer was convinced in this life that, indeed, there was no true blessedness but this enjoyment of God in the kingdom of heaven. The Lord revealed this to his heart by his word and Spirit; and therefore he contemned the seeming happiness on earth, and laid up for himself a treasure in heaven, and made him friends with the mammon of unrighteousness, and ventured all his hope in this vessel. And now he findeth the wisdom of that choice in a rich return. God made him so wise a merchant as to sell all for this pearl of greatest price, and therefore now he shall find the gain. As there is no other true happiness but God in glory, so there is nothing more suitable and welcome to the true believer. Oh! how welcome will the face of that God be, whom he loved, whom he sought, whom he longed and waited for. How welcome will that kingdom be which he lived in hope of; which he parted with all for, and suffered for in the flesh! How glad will he be to see the blessed face of his Redeemer, who, by his manifold grace, hath brought him unto this! I leave the believing soul to think of

it, and to make it the daily matter of his delightful meditation; what an inconceivable joy, in one moment, this sentence of Christ will fill his soul with. Undoubtedly, it is now quite past our comprehensions, though our imperfect forethoughts of it may well make our lives a continual feast.

Were it but our justification from the accusations of Satan, who would have us condemned either as sinners in general, or as impenitent, unbelieving rebels against him that redeemed us in special, it would lift up the heads of the saints in that day. After all the fears of our own hearts, and the slanderous accusations of Satan and the world, that we were either impenitent infidels, or hypocrites, Christ will then justify us, and pronounce us righteous. So much for the condition to which they are judged.

2. The reason or cause of this justification of the saints is given us both, 1. In a general denomination, and, 2. In a particular description. 1. In general, it is because they were righteous, as is evident, Matt. xxv. 46, "The righteous shall go into life everlasting." And, indeed, it is the business of every just judge to justify the righteous, and condemn the unrighteous: and shall not the Judge of all the earth judge righteously? (Gen. xviii. 25.) God makes men righteous before he judges them so, and judgeth them righteous because they are so. He that abominateth that man who saith to the righteous, 'Thou art wicked,' or to the wicked, 'Thou art righteous,' who justifieth the wicked, and condemneth the righteous, will certainly never do so himself.

Indeed, he will justify them who are sinners, but not against the accusation that they are sinners, but against the accusation that they are guilty of punishment for sin: but that is because he first made them just, and so justifiable, by pardoning their sin through the blood of Christ.

And it is true also that he will justify those that were wicked, but not those that are wicked: but judgment findeth them as death leaveth them; and he will not take them for wicked who are sanctified and cleansed of their former wickedness. So that Christ will first pardon them before he justify them against the charge of being sinners in general; and he will first give men faith, repentance, and new obedience, before he will justify them against the charge of being impenitent infidels, or hypocrites, and consequently unpardoned, and doubly guilty of

damnation. This two-fold righteousness he will first give men, and so constitute them just, before he will declare it, and sentence them just.

2. The reason of the sentence particularly described, is from their faith and love to Christ, expressed in their obedience, self-denial, and forsaking all for him. "For I was hungry, and ye fed me; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came to me. Verily, I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it to one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." (Matt. xxv. 35—41.) Here is, 1. The causal conjunction "for." 2. And the cause or reason itself.

Concerning both which observe, 1. How it is that man's obedience and self-denial is the reason and cause of his justification. 2. Why it is that God will have the reason or cause thus declared in the sentence.

For the first, observe that it is one thing to give a reason of the sentence, and another thing to express the cause of the benefit given us by the promise, and judged to us by the sentence. Man's obedience was no proper cause why God did, in this life, give pardon of sin to us, or a right to glory; much less of his giving Christ to die for us: and therefore, as to our constitutive justification at our conversion, we must not say or think that God doth justify us, for, or because of, any works of our obedience, legal or evangelical. But when God hath so justified us, when he comes to give a reason of his sentence in judgment, he may and will fetch that reason partly from our obedience, or our performance of the conditions of the new covenant: for, as in this life, we had a righteousness consisting in free pardon of all sin through the blood of Christ, and a righteousness consisting in our personal performance of the conditions of the promise which giveth that pardon, and continueth it to us, so at judgment we shall accordingly be justified. And as our evangelical personal righteousness, commonly called inherent, was at first only in our faith and repentance, and disposition to obey; but afterwards in our actual sincere obedience, in which sense we are constitutively justified, or made righteous here by our works, in James's sense; (James ii. 24;) so, accordingly, a double reason will be assigned of our sentential justification; one from our pardon by Christ's blood and merits, which will prove our right to impunity and glory, the other from our own faith

and holy obedience, which will prove our right to that pardon through Christ, and to the free gift of a right to glory : and so this last is to be pleaded in subordination to the former, for Christ is become the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him. (Heb. v. 9.) He, therefore, that will be saved, must have a Christ to save him as the author, and an obedience to that Christ as the condition of that salvation ; and consequently both must be declared in the judgment.

The reason why the Judge doth mention our good works, rather than our believing, may be because those holy, self-denying expressions of faith and love to Christ do contain or certainly imply faith in them, as the life of the tree is in the fruit ; but faith doth contain our works of obedience but only as their cause. These works also are a part of the personal righteousness which is to be inquired after ; that is, we shall not be judged righteous merely because we have believed, but also because we have added to our faith virtue, and have improved our talents, and have loved Christ to the hazard of all for his sake : for it is not only, or principally, for the goodness of the work considered in itself, or the good that is done by it to the poor ; but it is as these works did express our faith and love to Christ by doing him the most costly and hazardous service ; that by faith we could see Christ in a poor beggar, or a prisoner ; and could love Christ in these better than our worldly goods or liberties, which we must part with, or hazard by the works that are here mentioned.

2. The reasons why Christ will so publicly declare the personal righteousness of men to be the reason or cause of his justifying sentence, are because it is the business of that day, not only to glorify God's mere love and mercy, but eminently to glorify his remunerative justice ; and not only to express his love to the elect as such, but to express his love to them as faithful and obedient, and such as have denied all for Christ, and loved God above all ; and to show his justice to the men, and faithfulness in fulfilling all his promises, and also his holiness in the high estimation of the holiness of his people. I shall express this in the words of a learned divine : (Dr. Twiss against Mr. Cotton, page 40 :) ' Was there no more in God's intention when he elected some, than the manifestation of the riches of his glorious grace ? Did not God purpose also to manifest the glory of his remunerative justice ? Is it not undeniable that God will bestow salvation on all his elect (of ripe years) by way of reward

and crown of righteousness, which God the righteous Judge will give? (2 Tim. iv.; 2 Thess. i.) It is great pity this is not considered, as usually it is not, especially for the momentous consequence thereof in my judgment.' So far he.

So much of the sentence of justification which shall be passed by Christ, at judgment, upon the righteous.

2. We are next to consider of the sentence of condemnation which shall then, by Christ, be passed on the unrighteous; which is delivered to us by Christ, (Matt. xxv.,) in the same order as the former.

This sentence containeth, 1. The condemnation itself. 2. The reason or cause of it.

The condemnation expresseth the misery which they are judged to. 1. Generally in the denomination "cursed." 2. Particularly by description of their cursed state.

To be cursed, is to be a people destinated and adjudged to utter unhappiness; to all kinds of misery without remedy.

2. Their cursed condition is described in the next words; "Depart from me into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

1. "Depart:" From whom? From the God that made them in his image; from the Redeemer that bought them by the price of his blood, and offered to save them freely for all their unworthiness, and many a time entreated them to accept his offer, that their souls might live; from the Holy Ghost the Sanctifier and Comforter of the faithful, who strove with their hearts, till they quenched and expelled him. Oh! sad departing! Who would not then choose rather to depart from all the friends he had in the world, and from any thing imaginable; from his life, from himself, if it were possible, than from Christ? "Depart:" From what? Why from the presence of the Judge, from all further hopes of salvation for ever, from all possibility of ever being saved, and living in the joyful inheritance of the righteous. "Depart:" Not from God's essential presence, for that will be with them to their everlasting misery, but from the presence of his grace, in that measure as they enjoyed it. "Depart:" Not from your fleshly pleasures, and honours, and profits of the world, these were all gone and passed already, and there was no further need to bid them depart from these. Houses and lands were gone, mirth and recreations were gone, their sweet morsels and cups were gone, all the honour that men could give them was gone, before they were set at Christ's bar

to be judged. But from all expectations of ever enjoying these again, or ever tasting their former delights, from these they must depart: not from their sin, for that will go with them. But the liberty of committing that part of it which was sweet to them, as gluttony, drunkenness, whoredom, idleness, and all voluptuousness—from these they must depart. But this is consequential. It is Christ and the possibility of salvation that they are sentenced to depart from.

But whither must they depart? 1. Into fire. 2. Into that fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels. 3. Into everlasting fire.

1. Not into a purifying, but a tormenting, fire. Whether elementary or not, whether properly or metaphorically called fire, let us not vainly trouble ourselves to inquire. It is enough to know, that as fire is one of the most grievous tormentors of the flesh, so grievous will be those infernal torments to the whole man, soul and body, such as is most fitly represented to us under the notion of fire, and of burning. It is easy for a secure, unbelieving soul to read and hear of it; but wo, and ten thousand woes to them that must endure it! In this life they had their good things, when it went harder as to the flesh with better men; but now they are tormented, when the godly are comforted. (Luke xvi. 25.)

2. But why is it called “a fire prepared for the devil and his angels?” 1. What is this devil that hath angels? 2. Who are his angels? 3. When was it prepared for them? 4. Was it not also prepared for wicked men? To these in order.

1. It seems by many passages in Scripture that there is an order among spirits, both good and bad; and that there is one devil, who is the prince over the rest.

2. It seems, therefore, that it is the rest of the evil spirits that are called “his angels.” And some think that the wicked who served him in this life shall be numbered with his angels in the life to come. Indeed, the apostle calls him, “the god of this world,” (2 Cor. iv. 4,) as is ordinarily judged by expositors; and “the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience;” (Eph. ii. 2;) and he calleth false, seducing teachers “the ministers of Satan:” (2 Cor. xi. 15:) but that wicked men are here meant as part of his angels is not clear.

3. If it be the preparation of God’s purpose that is here meant, then it was from eternity: but if it be any commination

of God as ruler of the angels, then was this fire prepared for them conditionally, from the beginning of that commination, and was due to them at their fall.

4. It seems that the reason why here is no mention of preparing hell-fire for the wicked, but only for the devils, is not because, indeed, it was not prepared also for the wicked; but to note that it is the torment which was first prepared for, or assigned to, the devils; thereby showing the greatness of the misery of the wicked, that the devil and his angels must be their companions. Though some think, as is said before, that the reason why wicked men are not mentioned here, is because they are part of the angels of the devil, and so included. And some think it is purposely to manifest God's general love to mankind, that prepared not hell for them, but they cast themselves into the hell prepared for the devils. But the first seems to be the true sense.

And how apparently righteous are the judgments of the Lord! That those men who would here entertain the devil into their hearts and daily familiarity, should be then entertained by him into his place of torments, and there remain for ever in his society! Though few entertained him into visible familiarity with their bodies, as witches do, who so make him their familiar, yet all wicked men do entertain him in a more full and constant familiarity with their souls than these witches do with their bodies. How familiar is he in their thoughts, to fill them with vanity, lust, or revenge! How familiar is he in their hearts, to fill them with covetousness, malice, pride, or the like evils; and to banish all thoughts of returning to God, and to quench every motion that tendeth to their recovery! How familiar is he with them, even when they seem to be worshipping God in the public assemblies, stealing the word out of their hearts, filling them with vain and wandering thoughts, blinding their minds that they cannot understand the plainest words which we are able to speak to them, and filling them with a proud rebellion against the direction of their teachers, and an obstinate refusal to be ruled by them, be the matter never so necessary to their own salvation! How familiar are these evil spirits in their houses, filling them with ignorance, worldliness, and ungodliness, and turning out God's service, so that they do not pray together once in a day, or perhaps at all! How familiarly doth Satan use their tongues, in cursing, swearing, lying, ribaldry, backbiting, or slandering; and is it not just with God to make these fiends their familiars

in torment, with whom they entertained such familiarity in sin ! As Christ, with all the blessed angels and saints, will make but one kingdom or family, and shall live all together in perpetual delights; so the devil and all his hellish angels and wicked men shall make but one household, and shall live all together in perpetual misery. O poor sinners ! you are not troubled now at his presence and power in your hearts ; but will you not then be troubled at his presence and tormenting power ? As long as you do not see him, let him do what he will with you, it grieves you little or nothing at all ; but what will you say when you must see him, and abide with him for ever ? Oh ! sirs, his name is easily heard, but his company will be terrible to the stoutest heart alive. He showeth you a smiling face when he tempteth you, but he hath a grimmer face to show you when temptations have conquered you, and torments must succeed. As those who write of witches say he appeareth at first to them in some comely tempting shape, till he have them fast tied to him, and then he beats them, and affrights them, and seldom appears to them but in some ugly hue. Believe it, poor sinners, you do not hear or see the worst of him when you are merry about your sinful pleasures, and rejoicing in your hopes of the commodities or preferments of the world. He hath another kind of voice which you must hear, and another face to show you, that will make you know a little better whom you had to do with ! You would be afraid now to meet him in the dark. What will it be to live with him in everlasting darkness ? Then you will know who it was that you entertained and obeyed, and played with in your sins.

3. And as the text tells us, that it is “ a fire prepared for the devil and his angels,” so it telleth us that it is “ an everlasting fire.” It had a beginning, but it shall have no end. If these wretches would have chosen the service of God, they would have met with no difficulty or trouble, but what would have had a speedy end. Poverty and injuries would have had end ; scorns and abuses would have had an end ; fasting, humiliation, sorrow for sin, watching, and fighting against our spiritual enemies, would all have had an end. But to avoid these, they chose that ease, that pleasure, which hath brought them to that torment which never will have end. I have said so much of these things already in my book called the Saints’ Rest, that I will now say but this much. It is one of the wonders of the world how men who do believe, or think they

do believe, this word of Christ to be true, that "the wicked shall go into everlasting fire," can yet venture on sin so boldly, and live in it so fearlessly, or sleep quietly till they are out of this unspeakable danger. Only the commonness of it, and the known wickedness of man's heart, doth make this less wonderful: and were there nothing else to convince us that sinners are mad, and dead as to spiritual things, this were enough, that ever the greatest pleasures or profits of the world, or the most enticing baits which the devil can offer them, should once prevail with them to forget these endless things, and draw them to reject an everlasting glory, and cast themselves desperately into everlasting fire; yea, and all this under daily warnings and instructions, and when it is told them beforehand by the God of truth himself! For the Lord's sake, sirs, and for your souls' sakes, if you care not what ministers say, or what such as I say, yet will you soberly read now and then this twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew, and regard what is told you by him that must be your Judge! and now and then bethink yourselves, soberly, whether these are matters for wise men to make light of; and what it is to be everlastingly in heaven or in hell-fire.

2. We have seen what is the penalty contained in the sentence against the ungodly, the next thing that the text directs us to is the cause or reason of the sentence, verse 42, "For I was hungry, and ye gave me no meat," &c. The reason is not given expressly either for their sin against the law of works, that is, because they were sinners, and not perfectly innocent, nor yet from their unbelief, which is the great sin against the law of grace, but it is given from their not expressing their faith and love to Christ in works of mercy and self-denial. And why is this so?

1. We must not suppose that these words of Christ do express the whole judicial process in every point, but the chief parts. It is supposed that all men are convicted of being sinners against the perfect law of the Creator, and that they are guilty of death for that sin, and that there is no way but by Christ to obtain deliverance. But because all this must be acknowledged by the righteous themselves, as well as by the wicked, therefore Christ doth not mention this, but that only which is the turning point or cause in the judgment. For it is not all sinners that shall be finally condemned, but all impenitent, unbelieving sinners, who have rebelled finally against their Redeemer.

2. And the reason why faith itself is not expressed, is,
 1. Because it is clearly implied, and so is love to Christ as Redeemer, in that they should have relieved Christ himself in his members; that is, as it is expressed in Matt. x. 42. They should have received a prophet in the name of a prophet, and a disciple in the name of a disciple; all should be done for Christ's sake, which could not be unless they believed in him, and loved him. 2. Also because that the bare act of believing is not all that Christ requireth to man's final justification and salvation, but holy self-denying obedience must be added, and therefore this is given as the reason of their condemnation, that they did not so obey.

We must observe, also, that Christ here putteth the special for the general; that is, one way of self-denying obedience, and expression of love, instead of such obedience in general. For all men have not ability to relieve those in misery, being perhaps some of them poor themselves; but all have that love and self-denial which will some way express itself, and all have hearts and a disposition to do thus, if they had ability; without such a disposition, none can be saved.

It is the fond conceit of some, that if they have any love to the godly, or wish them well, it is enough to prove them happy. But Christ here purposely lets us know that whoever doth not love him at so high a rate as that he can part with his substance, or any thing in the world, to those uses which he shall require them, even to relieve his servants in want and sufferings for the Master's sake, that man is none of Christ's disciples, nor will be owned by him at the last.

XI. The next point that we come to, is to show you the properties of this sentence at judgment.

When man had broken the law of his Creator at the first, he was liable to the sentence of death, and God presently sat in judgment on him, and sentenced him to some part of the punishment which he had deserved; but upon the interposition of the Son, he before the rest resolved on a way that might tend to his recovery, and death is due yet to every sinner for every sin which he commits, till a pardon do acquit him. But this sentence, which will pass on sinners at the last judgment, doth much differ from that which was passed on the first sin, or which is due according to the law of works alone, for,

1. As to the penalty called the pain of loss, the first judgment

did deprive man of the favour of his Creator, but the second will deprive him of the favour both of the Creator and Redeemer; the first judgment deprived him of the benefits of innocency; the second deprives him of the benefits of redemption, the loss of his hopes, and possibility of a pardon, of the spirit of justification and adoption, and of the benefits which conditionally were promised and offered him. These are the punishments of the last judgment, which the law of works did never threaten to the first man, or to any, as it stood alone.

Also the loss of glory as recovered, is the proper penalty of the violated law of grace, which is more than the first loss. As if a man should lose his purse the second time, when another hath once found it for him; or rather as if a traitor redeemed by another, and having his life and honours offered him if he will thankfully accept it and come in, should by his refusal and obstinacy lose this recovered life which is offered him, which is an addition to his former penalty.

Besides, that the higher degree of glory will be lost, which Christ would bestow on him, more than was lost at first. The very work of the saints in heaven will be to praise and glorify him that redeemed them, and the Father in him, which would not have been the work of man, if he had been innocent.

2. As to the pain of sense, the last judgment by the Redeemer will sentence them to a far sorer punishment than would have befallen them if no Saviour had been offered them. (Heb. x. 29.) The conscience of Adam, if he had not been redeemed, would never have tormented him for rejecting a Redeemer, nor for refusing or abusing his gracious offers and his mercies; nor for the forfeiting of a recovered happiness; nor for refusing the easy terms of the gospel, which would have given him Christ and salvation for the accepting; nor for neglecting any means that tended to recovery; no, nor for refusing repentance unto life, nor for disobeying a Redeemer that bought him by his blood. As all these are the penalties of the Redeemer's law and judgment, so is it a sorer penalty than conscience would have inflicted merely for not being perfectly innocent, and they will be far sorer gripings and gnawings of the never-dying worm for the abuse of these talents, than if we had never been trusted with any after our first forfeiture. Yea, and God himself will accordingly proportion his punishments. So that you see that privately and positively, or as to their loss and their feeling, the Redeemer will pass on them a heavier doom than the Creator

did, or would have done, according to the first law to perfect man.

Another property of the judgment of Christ is, that it will be final, peremptory, and excluding all further hopes or possibilities of a remedy; so was not the first judgment of the Creator upon fallen man. Though the law of pure nature knew no remedy, nor gave man any hope of a Redeemer, yet did it not exclude a remedy, nor put in any bar against one, but God was free to recover his creature if he pleased. But in the law of grace he hath resolved that there shall be no more sacrifice for sin, but a fearful looking for of judgment and fire which shall devour the adversary, (Heb. x. 26, 27,) and that the fire shall be everlasting, the worm shall not die, and the fire shall not be quenched. (Matt. xxv. ult.; Matt. xiii. 42, 50; John v. 27; Matt. v. 26; Matt. iii. 12, and Luke iii. 17; Mark ix. 43—48.) He that now breaketh that pure law that requireth perfect innocency (as we have all done) may fly to the promise of grace in Christ, and appeal to the law of liberty, or deliverance, to be judged by that, but he that falls under the penalty of that law which should have saved him, as all final unbelievers and impenitent, ungodly persons do, hath no other to appeal to. Christ would have been a sanctuary and refuge to thee from the law of works, hadst thou but come unto him; but who shall be a refuge to thee from the wrath of Christ? The gospel would have freed thee from the curse of the law of works if thou hadst but believed and obeyed it, but what shall free thee from the condemnation of the gospel? Had there no accusation lain against thee, but that thou wast in general a sinner, that is, that thou wast not perfectly innocent, Christ would have answered that charge by his blood. But seeing thou art also guilty of those special sins which he never shed his blood for, who shall deliver thee from that accusation? When Christ gave himself a ransom for sinners, it was with this resolution, both in the Father and himself, that none should ever be pardoned, justified, or saved by that ransom that did not, in time of this life, sincerely return to God by faith in the Redeemer, and live in sincere obedience to him, and persevering herein. So that he plainly excepted final infidelity, impenitency, and rebellion from pardon; he never died for the final non-performance of the conditions of the new covenant, so that his judgment for these will be peremptory and remediless. If you say, 'Why cannot God find out a remedy for this sin as well as he did for the

first?' I say, God cannot lie. (Tit. i. 2.) He must be true and faithful, as necessarily as he must be God, because of the absolute perfection of his nature, and he hath said and resolved that there shall be no more remedy.

Many other properties of God's judgment general there are, as righteousness, impartiality, inflexibility, and the like; which, because I would not make my discourse too long, I will pass over, contenting myself with the mention of these which are proper to the judgment of the Redeemer, according to his own laws in special.

XII. The twelfth and last thing which I promised to unfold, is the execution of this judgment. Here I should show you both the certainty of the execution, and by whom it will be, and how; but having done all this already in the third part of the aforesaid Book of Rest, I shall now only give this brief touch of it.

No sooner is the dreadful sentence passed, "Go, ye cursed, into everlasting fire," but away they must be gone, there is no delay, much less any reprieve to be expected, and yet much less is there any hope of an escape. If the Judge once say, 'Take him, gaoler,' and if Christ say, 'Take him, devils, you that ruled and deceived him, now torment him,' all the world cannot rescue one such soul. It will be in vain to look about for help. Alas! there is none but Christ can help you, and he will not, because you refused his help. Nay, we may say he cannot, not for want of power, but because he is true and just, and therefore will make good that word which you believed not. It is in vain then to cry to hills to fall on you, and the mountains to cover you from the presence of him that sitteth on the throne. It will be then in vain now to repent, and wish you had not slighted your salvation, nor sold it for little pleasure to your flesh. It will be then in vain to cry, 'Lord, Lord, open to us; O spare us; O pity us; O do not cast us into these hideous flames! Do not turn us among devils! Do not torment thy redeemed ones in this fire!' All this will be then too late.

Poor sinner, whoever thou art, that readest or hearest these lines, I beseech thee, in compassion to thy soul, consider how fearful the case of that man will be that is newly doomed to the everlasting fire, and is hauled to the execution without remedy! And what madmen are those that now do no more to prevent such a misery, when they might do it on such easy terms, and now have so fair an opportunity in their hands.

The time was when repentance might have done thee good, but then all thy repentings be in vain. Now, while the day of thy visitation lasteth, hadst thou but a heart to pray and cry for mercy, in faith and fervency through Christ, thou mightest be heard; but then praying and crying will do no good, shouldest thou roar out in the extremity of thy horror and amazement, and beseech the Lord Jesus but to forgive thee one sin, or to send thee on earth once more, and to try thee once again in the flesh, whether thou wouldest not love him, and lead an holy life, it would be all in vain. Shouldest thou beseech him by all the mercifulness of his nature, by all his sufferings and bloody death, by all the merciful promises of his gospel, it would be all in vain. Nay, shouldest thou beg but one day's reprieval, or to stay one hour before thou were cast into those flames, it would not be heard, it would do thee no good. How earnestly did a deceased gentleman (Luke xvi. 24) beg of Abraham for one drop of water from the tip of Lazarus's finger to cool his tongue, because he was tormented in the flame! And what the better was he? He was sent to remember that he had his good things in this life, and that remembrance would torment him more. And do not wonder or think much at this, that Christ will not then be entreated by the ungodly. You shall then have a remember, too, from Christ or conscience. He may soon stop thy mouth, and leave thee speechless, and say, 'Remember, man, that I did one day send thee a message of peace, and thou wouldest not hear it. I once did stoop to beseech thee to return, and thou wouldest not hear. I besought thee by the tender mercies of God, I besought thee by all the love that I had showed thee, by my holy life, by my cursed death, by the riches of my grace, by the offers of my glory, and I could not get thee to forsake the world, to deny the flesh, to leave one beloved sin for all this! I besought thee over and over again, sent many a minister to thee in my name, I waited on thee many a day, and year, and all would not do, thou wouldest not consider, return, and live, and now it is too late. My sentence is past, and cannot be recalled. Away from me, thou worker of iniquity. (Matt. vii. 22, 23.)

Ah, sirs, what a case then is the poor desperate sinner left in! How can I write this, or how can you that read or hear it without trembling, once think of the condition that such forlorn wretches will be in! When they look above them, and see the God that hath forsaken them, because they forsook him

first ; when they look about them, and see the saints on one hand, whom they despised, now sentenced unto glory, and the wicked on the other hand, whom they accompanied and imitated, now judged with them to everlasting misery ; when they look below them, and see the flames that they must abide in, even for evermore, and when the devils begin to hail them to the execution ; oh ! poor souls, now what would they give for a Christ, for a promise, for a time of repentance, for a sermon of mercy, which once they slept under, or made no account of ! How is the case altered now with them ! Who would think that these are the same men that made light of all this on earth, that so stoutly scorned the reproofs of the word, that would be worldly, and fleshly, and drunk, and proud, let preachers say what they would, and perhaps hated those that did give them warning. Now they are of another mind, but all too late. Oh, were there any place for resistance, how would they draw back, and lay hold of any thing, before they would be dragged away into those flames ! But there is no resisting ; Satan's temptations might have been resisted, but his executions cannot ; God's judgments might have been prevented by faith and prayer, repentance, and a holy life, but they cannot be resisted when they are not prevented. Glad would the miserable sinner be if he might but turn to nothing, and cease to be, or that he might be any thing rather than a reasonable creature, but these wishes are all in vain. There is one time, and one way of a sinner's deliverance, if he fail in that one, he perisheth for ever ; all the world cannot help him after that. " I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in a day of salvation have I succoured thee ; behold now is the accepted time ; behold now is the day of salvation." (2 Cor. vi. 2.) Now, he saith, " Behold, I stand at the door and knock, if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." (Rev. iii. 20.) But for the time to come hereafter, hear what he saith. " Because I have called, and ye refused ; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded ; but ye have set at nought all my counsels, and would none of my reproof : I also will laugh at your calamity ; I will mock when your fear cometh ; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind ; when distress and anguish cometh upon you, then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer ; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me, for that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of

the Lord; they would none of my counsels; they despised all my reproofs; therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices; for the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them, but whoso hearkeneth to me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil." I have recited all these words, that you may see and consider whether I have spoke any other thing than God himself hath plainly told you of.

Having said this much of the certainty of the execution, I should next have spoken somewhat of the manner and the instruments, and have showed how God will be for ever the principal cause, and Satan and their own consciences the instruments, in part, and in what manner conscience will do its part, and how impossible it will be to quiet or resist it. But having spoken so much of all this already elsewhere, as is said before, I will forbear here to repeat it, leaving the reader that desireth it there to peruse it.

The uses.—*Use 1.* Beloved hearers, it was not to fill your fancies with news that God sent me hither this day, nor to tell you of matters that nothing concern you, nor by some terrible words to bring you to an hour's amazement, and no more; but it is to tell you of things that your eyes shall see, and to foretell you of your danger while it may be prevented, that your precious souls may be saved at the last, and you may stand before God with comfort at that day; but because this will not be every man's case, no, nor the case of most, I must, in the name of Christ, desire you to make, this day, an inquiry into your own souls, and, as in the presence of God, let your hearts make answer to these few questions, which I shall propound and debate with you.

Quest. 1. Do you soundly believe this doctrine which I have preached to you? What say you, sirs? Do you believe it as a most certain truth, that you and I, and all the world, must stand at God's bar and be judged to everlasting joy or torment? I hope you do all, in some sort, believe this: but blame me not if I be jealous whether you soundly believe it, while we see in the world so little of the effect of such a belief. I confess I am forced to think that there is more infidelity than faith among us, when I see more ungodliness than godliness among us; and I can hardly believe that man that will say or swear that he believeth these things, and yet liveth as carelessly and carnally as an infidel. I know that no man can love to be damned; yea,

I know that every man that hath a reasonable soul hath naturally some love to himself, and a fear of a danger which he verily apprehendeth; he therefore that liveth without all fear, I must think liveth without all apprehension of his danger. Custom hath taught men to hold these things as the opinion of the country; but if men soundly believed them, surely we should see stronger effects of such a faith, than in the most we do see. Doth the sleepy soul that liveth in security, and followeth this world as eagerly as if he had no greater matters to mind; that never once trembled at the thoughts of this great day, nor once asked his own soul in good sadness, 'My soul, how dost thou think then to escape?' I say, doth this man believe that he is going to this judgment? Well, sirs, whether you believe it or not, you will find it true; and believe it you must, before you can be safe. For if you do not believe it, you will never make ready. Let me therefore persuade you in the fear of God to consider that it is a matter of undoubted truth.

1. Consider that it is the express word of the God of truth revealed in Scripture as plainly as you can desire; so that you cannot be unbelieving without denying God's word, or giving him the lie. (Matt. xiii. 38—50; Matt. xxv. throughout; Rom. ii. 5—10, 16, and i. 32; John v. 28, 29.) "The hour is coming in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation." "It is appointed to all men once to die, and after this the judgment." (Heb. ix. 27.) "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. (Rom. xiv. 9, 12.) "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God, and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books according to their works." (Rev. xx. 12.) "But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof at the day of judgment; for by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned. (Matt. xii. 36, 37.) Many more most express texts of Scripture do put the truth of this judgment out of all question to all that believe the Scripture, and will understand it. There is no place left for a controversy in the point. It is made as sure to us as the word of the living God can make it; and he who will question that, what will he believe? What say you, sirs? Dare you doubt of this, which

the God of heaven hath so positively affirmed? I hope you dare not.

2. Consider it is a master-part of your faith, if you are Christians, and a fundamental article of your creed, that Christ shall come again to judge the quick and the dead: so that you must believe it, or renounce your Christianity, and then you renounce Christ, and all the hopes of mercy that you have in him. It is impossible that you should soundly believe in Christ, and not believe his judgment and life everlasting; because, as he came to bring life and immortality to light in the gospel, (2 Tim. i. 10,) so it was the end of his incarnation, death, and resurrection, to bring you thither; and it is part of his honour and office which he purchased with his blood, to be the Lord and Judge of all the world. (Rom. xiv. 9; Job v. 22.) If, therefore, you believe not heartily this judgment, deal plainly and openly, and say you are infidels, and cast away the hypocritical visor of Christianity, and let us know you, and take you as you are.

3. Consider that it is a truth which is known by the very light of nature, that there shall be a happiness for the righteous and a misery for the wicked, after this life; which is evident,

1. In that we have undeniable natural reason for it. 1. God is the righteous governor of the world, and therefore must make a difference among his subjects, according to the nature of their ways; which we see is not done here, where the wicked prosper and the good are afflicted; therefore it must be hereafter. 2. We see there is a necessity that God should make promises and threatenings of everlasting happiness or misery for the right governing of the world: for we certainly perceive that no lower things will keep men from destroying all human society and living worse than brute beasts; and if there be a necessity of making such threats and promises, then there is, certainly, a necessity of fulfilling them; for God needeth no lie, or means of deceiving, to rule the world.

2. And as we see it by reason, so by certain experience, that this is discernible by the light of nature; for all the world, or almost all, do believe it. Even those nations where the gospel never came, and have nothing but what they have by nature, even the most barbarous Indians, acknowledge some life after this, and a difference of men according as they are here. Therefore you must believe thus much, or renounce your common reason and humanity, as well as your Christianity. Let me, there-

fore, persuade you all, in the fear of God, to confirm your souls in the belief of this, as if you had heard Christ or an angel from heaven say to you, 'Oh! man, thou art hastening to judgment.'

Quest. 2. My next question is, 'Whether you do ever soberly consider of this great day?' Sirs, do you use, when you are alone, to think with yourselves how certain, and how dreadful it will be; how fast it is coming on; and what you shall do, and what answer you mean to make at that day? Are your minds taken up with these considerations? Tell me, is it so, or not?

Alas, sirs! is this a matter to be forgotten? Is not that man even worse than mad who is going to God's judgment and never thinks of it? When, if they were to be tried for their lives at the next assize they would think of it, and think again, and cast a hundred times which way to escape. Methinks you should rather forget to go to bed at night, or to eat your meat, or do your work, than forget so great a matter as this.

Truly, I have often, in my serious thoughts, been ready to wonder that men can think of almost any thing else, when they have so great a thing to think of. What! forget that which thou must remember for ever! forget that which should force remembrance, yea, and doth force it with some, whether they will or not. A poor despairing soul cannot forget it: he thinks, whichever way he goes, he is ready to be judged. Oh! therefore, beloved, fix these thoughts as deep in your hearts as thoughts can go. Oh! be like that holy man, who thought that whichever way he went he heard the trumpet sound, and the voice of the angel calling to the world, "Arise, ye dead, and come to judgment." You have warning of it from God and man to cause you to remember it; do not then forget it. It will be a cold excuse another day, 'Lord, I forgot this day, or else I might have been ready.' You dare not, sure, trust to such excuses.

Quest. 3. My next question to you is, 'How are you affected with the consideration of this day? Barely to think of it will not serve. To think of such a day as this with a dull and senseless heart is a sign of fearful stupidity. Did the knees of king Belshazzar knock together with trembling when he saw the hand-writing on the wall? (Dan. v. 6.) How then should thy heart be affected, that seeth the hand-writing of God as a summons to his bar?

When I began to preach of these things long ago, I confess the matters seemed to me so terrible, that I was afraid that people would have run out of their wits with fear; but a little experience showed me, that many are like a dog that is bred up in a forge or furnace, that being used to it, can sleep, though the hammers are beating, and the fire and hot iron flaming about him, when another that had never seen it would be amazed at the sight. When men have heard us seven years together, yea, twenty years, to talk of a day of judgment, and they see it not, nor feel any hurt, they think it is but talk, and begin to make nothing of it. This is their thanks to God for his patience, because his sentence is not executed speedily, therefore their hearts are set in them to do evil, (Eccles. viii. 11,) as if God were slack of his promise, as some men account slackness, (2 Peter iii. 9,) when one day with him is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. What, if we tell you twenty years together that you must die, will you not believe us, because you have lived so long, and seen no death coming?

Three or four things there be that should bring any matter to the heart. 1. If it be a matter of exceeding weight. 2. If it concern not others only, but ourselves. 3. If it be certain. 4. If near.

All these things are here to be found, and therefore how should your hearts be moved at the consideration of this great day!

1. What matter can be mentioned with the tongue of man of greater moment? For the poor creature to stand before his Maker and Redeemer, to be judged to everlasting joy or torment? Alas! all the matters of this world are plays, and toys, and dreams to this; matters of profit or disprofit are nothing to it; matters of credit or discredit are unworthy to be named with it; matters of temporal life or death are nothing to it. We see the poor brute beasts go every day to the slaughter, and we make no great matter of it, though their life be as dear to them as ours to us. To be judged to an everlasting death or torment, this is the great danger that one would think should shake the stoutest heart to consider it, and awake the dullest sinner to prevent it.

2. It is a matter which concerneth every one of yourselves, and every man or woman that ever lived upon the earth, or ever shall do. I am not speaking to you of the affairs of some far country that are nothing to you but only to marvel at, which you never saw, nor ever shall do. No; it is thy own self, man or

woman, that hears me this day, that shalt as surely appear before the judgment seat of Christ, as the Lord liveth, and as he is true and faithful: and that is as sure as thou livest on this earth, or as heaven is over thee. That man who heareth all this with the most careless and blockish heart, shall be awakened, and stand with the rest at that day. That man who never thought of it, but spent his time in worldly matters, shall leave all, and there appear: that man that will not believe these things to be true, but maketh a jest of them, shall see and feel what he would not believe, and he also shall be there. The godly that waited in hope for that day, as the day of their full deliverance and coronation, they shall be there; those who have lain in the dust these five thousand years shall rise again, and all stand there. Hearer, whoever thou art, believe it, thou mayest better think to live without meat, to see without light, to escape death, and abide for ever on earth, than to keep away from that appearance. Willing or unwilling, thou shalt be there: and should not a matter, then, which so concerneth thyself, go near to thy heart, and awake thee from thy security?

3. That it is a matter of unquestionable certainty, I have partly showed you already, and more would do if I were preaching to known infidels. If the careless world had any just reason to think it were uncertain, their carelessness were more excusable. Methinks a man should be affected with that which he is certain shall come to pass, in a manner as if it were now in doing. "Ye perfectly know that the day of the Lord so cometh," &c. saith the apostle. (1 Thess. v. 2.)

4. This day is not only certain, but it is near, and therefore should affect you the more. I confess, if it were never so far off, yet seeing it will come at last, it should be carefully regarded; but when the Judge is at the door, (James v. 9,) and we are almost at the bar, and it is so short a time to this assize, what soul that is not dead will be secure?

Alas! sirs, what is a little time when it is gone? How quickly shall you and I be all in another world, and our souls receive their particular judgment, and so wait till the body be raised and judged to the same condition? It is not an hundred years, in all likelihood, till every soul of us shall be in heaven or hell: and it is not like half, or a quarter, of that time, but it will be so with the greater part of us: and what is a year, or two, or an hundred? How speedily is it come! How many a soul that is now in heaven or hell, within a hundred years dwelt in the

places which you now dwell in, and sat in the seats you now sit in? And now their time is past, what is it? Alas! how quickly will it be so with us! You know not, when you go to bed, but you may be judged by the next morning; or, when you rise, but you may be judged before night; but certainly you know that shortly it will be: and should not this, then, be laid to heart? yea, the general judgment will not be long; for, certainly we live in the end of the world.

Quest. 4. My next question is, 'Whether are you ready for this dreadful judgment when it comes, or not?' Seeing it is yourselves which must be tried, I think it concerns you to see that you be prepared. How often hath Christ warned us in the gospel, that we be "always ready," because we know not the day or hour of his coming; (Matt. xxiv. 42, 44, and xxv. 13; 1 Thess. v. 6;) and told us how sad a time it will be to those that are unready. (Matt. xxv. 11, 12.) Did men but well know what a meeting and greeting there will be between Christ and an unready soul, it would sure startle them, and make them look about them. What say you, beloved hearers, are you ready for judgment, or are you not? Methinks a man that knoweth he shall be judged should ask himself the question every day of his life, 'Am I ready to give up my account to God?' Do not you use to ask this of your own hearts? Unless you be careless whether you be saved or damned, methinks you should, and ask it seriously.

Quest. But who are they that are ready? How shall I know whether I be ready or not?

Ans. There is a two-fold readiness: 1. When you are in a safe case. 2. When you are in a comfortable case, in regard of that day. The latter is very desirable, but the first is of absolute necessity. This, therefore, is it that you must principally inquire after.

In general, all those, and only those, are ready for judgment, who shall be justified and saved, and not condemned, when judgment comes—they who have a good cause in a gospel sense. It may be known beforehand who these are; for Christ judgeth, as I told you, by his law. And therefore find out whom it is that the law of grace doth justify or condemn, and you may certainly know whom the Judge will justify or condemn; for he judgeth righteously.

If you further ask me who these are, remember that I told you before, that every man that is personally righteous, by ful-

filling the conditions of salvation in the gospel, shall be saved; and he that is found unrighteous, as having not fulfilled them, shall perish at that day.

Quest. Who are those?

Answ. I will tell you them in a few words, lest you should forget, because it is a matter that your salvation or damnation dependeth upon.

1. The soul that unfeignedly repenteth of his former sinful course, and turneth from it in heart and life, and loveth the way of godliness which he hated, and hateth the way of sin which he loved, and is become thoroughly a new creature, being born again, and sanctified by the Spirit of Christ, shall be justified; but all others shall certainly be condemned.

Good news to repenting converted sinners; but sad to impenitent, and him that knows not what this means.

2. That soul that feeling his misery under sin and the power of Satan and the wrath of God, doth believe what Christ hath done and suffered for man's restoration and salvation, and thankfully accepteth him as his only Saviour and Lord, on the terms that he is offered in the Gospel, and to those ends, even to justify him, sanctify, and guide him, and bring him at last to everlasting glory; that soul shall be justified at judgment; and he that doth not, shall be condemned.

Or, in short, in Scripture phrase, "He that believeth shall be saved; and he that believeth not, shall be condemned." (Mark xvi. 16.)

3. The soul that hath had so much knowledge of the goodness of God, and his love to man in creation, redemption, and the following mercies; and hath had so much conviction of the vanity of all creatures, as thereupon to love God more than all things below, so that he hath the chiefest room in the heart, and is preferred before all creatures ordinarily in a time of trial: that soul shall be justified at judgment, and all others shall be condemned.

4. That soul that is so apprehensive of the absolute sovereignty of God, as Creator and Redeemer, and of the righteousness of his law, and the goodness of his holy way, as that he is firmly resolved to obey him before all others; and doth accordingly give up himself to study his will, purposely that he may obey it, and doth walk in these holy ways, and hath so far mortified the flesh, and subdued the world and the devil, that the authority and word of God can do no more with him than

any other; and doth ordinarily prevail against all the persuasion and interest of the flesh; so that the main scope and bent of the heart and life is still for God; and when he sinneth, he riseth again by true repentance: I say, that soul, and that only, shall be justified in judgment, and be saved.

5. That soul that hath such believing thoughts of the life to come, that he taketh the promised blessedness for his portion, and is resolved to venture all else upon it; and in hope of this glory, doth set light comparatively by all things in this world, and waiteth for it as the end of this life; choosing any suffering that God shall call him to, rather than to lose his hopes of that felicity, and thus persevereth to the end; I say that soul, and none but that, shall be justified in judgment, and escape damnation.

In these five marks I have told you, briefly, who shall be justified and saved, and who shall be condemned, at the day of judgment. And if you would have them all in five words, they are but the description of these five graces—repentance, faith, love, obedience, hope.

But though I have laid these close together for your use; yet, lest you should think, that in so weighty a case, I am too short in the proof of what I so determine of, I will tell you, in the express words of many Scripture texts, who shall be justified, and who shall be condemned. "Except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." (John iii. 3.) "Without holiness none shall see God." (Heb. xii. 14.) "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." (Luke xiii. 3, 5.) "I send thee to open their eyes, and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among the sanctified by faith that is in me." (Acts xxvi. 18.) "Whoever believeth in him, shall not perish, but have everlasting life; he that believeth on him, is not condemned: he that believeth not, is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God: and this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." (John iii. 15—19.) "The hour is coming in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth, they that have done good, to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, to the resurrection of damnation." (John v. 28, 29.) "Cast the unprofitable servant into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of

teeth." (Matt. xxv. 30.) "But those, mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before me." (Luke xix. 27.) "Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having on a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness," &c. (Matt. xxii. 12, 13.) "For I say unto you, that except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in nowise enter into the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. v. 20.) "Not every one that saith, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." (Matt. vii. 21.) "He is become the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him." (Heb. v. 6.) "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in by the gate into the city." (Rev. xxii. 14.) "There is then no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, that walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." (Rom. viii. 1, 13.) "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. (Rom. viii. 9.) But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law." (Gal. v. 18.) "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." (Gal. vi. 7, 8.) "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." (Matt. vi. 21.) Read Psalm i., and many other texts to this purpose, of which some are cited in my Directions for Peace of Conscience. (Dir. xi.)

And thus I have told you from God's word, how you may know whether you are ready for judgment; which is the fourth thing that I would advise you to inquire after.

O sirs! what shift do you make to keep your souls from continual terrors as long as you remain unready for judgment? How do you keep the thoughts of it out of your mind that they do not break your sleep, and meet you in your business, and haunt you every way you go; while judgment is so near, and you are so unready? But I shall proceed to my next question.

Quest. 5. And in the last place, to those of you that are not yet ready, nor in a condition wherein you may be safe at that day, my question is, How are you resolved to prepare for judgment

for the time to come? Will you do no more than you have done hitherto? Or, will you now set yourselves, with all your might, to make preparation for so great a day? Methinks you should be now past all demurs, delays, or further doubtings about such a business; and by the consideration of what I have said already, you should be fully resolved to lose no more time, but presently to awake, and set upon the work. Methinks you should all say, 'We will do any thing the Lord shall direct us to do, rather than we will be unready for this final doom!' Oh! that there were but such hearts in you, that you were truly willing to follow the gracious guidance of the Lord, and to use but those sweet and reasonable means which he hath prescribed you in his word, that you may be ready for that day. Alas! it is no hard matter for me to tell you or myself what it is that we must do, if we will be happy; and it is no very hard matter to do it, so far as we are truly willing; but the difficulty is to be truly and thoroughly willing to this work. If I shall tell you what you must do for preparation, shall I not lose my labour? Will you resolve and promise, in the strength of grace, that you will faithfully and speedily endeavour to practise it, whoever shall gainsay it? Upon hope of this I will set you down some brief directions, which you must follow, if ever you will, with comfort, look the Lord Jesus in the face at the hour of death, or in the day of judgment.

The first direction is this: 'See that your souls be sincerely established in the belief of this judgment and everlasting life:' for if you do not soundly believe it, you will not seriously prepare for it. If you have the judgment and belief of an infidel, you cannot have the heart or the life of a Christian. Unbelief shuts out the most of the world from heaven: see that it do not so by you. If you say you cannot believe what you would, I answer, feed not your unbelief by wilfulness or unreasonableness: use God's means to overcome it, and shut not your eyes against the light, and then try the issue. (Heb. iii. 12—19.)

The second direction: 'Labour diligently to have a sound understanding of the nature of the laws and judgment of God.' On what terms it is that he dealeth with mankind, and on what terms he will judge them to life or death, and what the reward and punishment is. For if you know not the law by which you must be judged, you cannot know how to prepare for the judgment. Study the Scripture, therefore, and mark who they be that God promiseth to save, and who they be that he threat-

eneth to condemn ; for, according to that word, will the judgment pass.

The third direction : ‘ See that you take it as the very business of your lives to make ready for that day.’ Understand that you have no other business in this world but what doth necessarily depend on this. What else have you to do but to provide for everlasting [life,] and to use means to sustain your own bodies and others of purpose for this work, till it be happily done ? Live therefore as men that make this the main scope and care of their lives, and let all things else come in but on the by. Remember every morning, when you awake, that you must spend that day in preparation for your account, and that God doth give it you for that end. When you go to bed, examine your hearts what you have done that day in preparation for your last day, and take that time as lost which doth nothing to this end.’

The fourth direction : ‘ Use frequently to think of the certainty, nearness, and dreadfulness of that day, to keep life in your affections and endeavours, lest by inconsiderateness your souls grow stupid and negligent ;’ otherwise, because it is out of sight, the heart will be apt to grow hardened and secure. And do not think of it slightly, as a common thing, but purposely set yourselves to think of it, that it may rouse you up to such affections and endeavours as in some measure are answerable to the nature of the thing.

The fifth direction : ‘ Labour to have a lively feeling on thy heart of the evil and weight of that sin which thou art guilty of, and of the misery into which it hath brought thee, and would further bring thee if thou be not delivered, and so to feel the need of a deliverer.’ This must prepare thee to partake of Christ now, and if thou partake not of him now, thou canst not be saved by him then. It is these souls that now make light of their sin and misery, that must then feel them so heavy, as to be pressed by them into the infernal flames. And those that now feel little need of a Saviour, they shall then have none to save them when they feel their need.

The sixth direction : ‘ Understand and believe the sufficiency of that ransom and satisfaction to justice which Christ hath made for thy sins, and for the world, and how freely and universally it is offered in the gospel.’ Thy sin is not incurable or unpardonable, nor thy misery remediless : God hath provided a remedy in his Son Christ, and brought it so near thy hands, that

nothing but thy neglecting or wilful refusing it can deprive thee of the benefit. Settle thy soul in this belief.

The seventh direction : ‘ Understand and believe that for all Christ’s satisfaction there is an absolute necessity of sound faith and repentance to be in thy own self before thou canst be a member of him, or be pardoned, adopted, or justified by his blood.’ He died not for final infidelity and impenitency as predominant in any soul. As the law of his Father, which occasioned his suffering, required perfect obedience or suffering, so his own law, which he hath made for the conveyance of his benefits, doth require yet true faith and repentance of men themselves before they shall be pardoned by him, and sincere obedience and perseverance before they shall be glorified.

The eighth direction : ‘ Rest not, therefore, in an unrenewed, unsanctified state, that is, till this faith and repentance be wrought on thy own soul, and thou be truly broken off from thy former sinful course, and from all things in this world, and art dedicated, devoted, and resigned unto God.’ Seeing this change must be made, and these graces must be had, or thou must certainly perish, in the fear of God see that thou give no ease to thy mind till thou art thus changed. Be content with nothing till this be done. Delay not another day. How canst thou live merrily, or sleep quietly in such a condition, as if thou shouldst die in it, thou wouldest perish for ever? Especially when thou art every hour uncertain whether thou shalt see another hour, and not be presently snatched away by death? Methinks while thou art in so sad a case, which way ever thou art going, or whatever thou art doing, it should still come into thy thoughts, ‘ Oh ! what if I should die before I be regenerate, and have part in Christ !’

The ninth direction : ‘ Let it be the daily care of thy soul to mortify thy fleshly desires, and overcome this world, and live as in a continual conflict with Satan, which will not be ended till thy life do end.’ If any thing destroy thee by drawing away thy heart from God, it will be thy carnal self, thy fleshly desires, and the allurements of this world, which is the matter that they feed upon. This, therefore, must be the earnest work of life, to subdue this flesh, and set light by this world, and resist the devil, that by these would destroy thee. It is the common case of miserable hypocrites, that at first they list themselves under Christ as for a fight ; but they presently forget their state and

work, and when they are once, in their own conceit, regenerate, they think themselves so safe, that there is no further danger, and thereupon they do lay down their arms, and take that which they miscall their Christian liberty, and indulge and please that flesh which they promised to mortify, and close with the world which they promised to contemn, and so give up themselves to the devil, whom they promised to fight against. If once you apprehend that all your religion lieth in mere believing that all shall go well with you, and that the bitterness of death is past, and in a forbearance of some disgraceful sins, and being much in the exercise of your gifts, and in external ways of duty, and giving God a cheap and plausible obedience in those things only which the flesh can spare, you are then fallen into that deceitful hypocrisy which will as surely condemn you as open profaneness, if you get not out of it. You must live as in a fight, or you cannot overcome. You must live loose from all things in this world, if you will be ready for another. You must not live after the flesh, but mortify it by the Spirit, if you would not die, but live for ever. (Rom. viii. 13.) These things are not indifferent, but of flat necessity.

The tenth direction : ' Do all your works as men that must be judged for them.' It is not enough (at least in point of duty and comfort) that you judge this preparation in general to be the main business of your lives, but you should also order your particular actions by these thoughts, and measure them by their respects to this approaching day. Before you venture on them, inquire whether they will bear weight in judgment, and be sweet or bitter when they are brought to trial? Both for matter and manner this must be observed. O that you would remember this when temptations are upon you, when you are tempted to give up your minds to the world, and drown yourselves in earthly cares, will you bethink you soberly whether you would hear of this at judgment; and whether the world will be then as sweet as now; and whether this be the best preparation for your trial. When you are tempted to be drunk, or to spend your precious time in alehouses, or vain unprofitable company, or at cards, or dice, or any sinful or needless sports, bethink you then whether this will be comfortable at the reckoning; and whether time be no more worth to one that is so near eternity, and must make so strict an account of his hours; and whether there be not many better works before you, in which you might spend your time to your greater advantage, and to your greater comfort

when it comes to a review? When you are tempted to wantonness, fornication, or any other fleshly intemperance, bethink you soberly with what face these actions will appear at judgment, and whether they will be then pleasant or unpleasant to you. So when you are tempted to neglect the daily worshipping of God in your families, and the catechising and teaching of your children or servants, especially on the Lord's day, bethink yourselves then what account you will give of this to Christ, when he that entrusted you with the care of your children and servants, shall call you to a reckoning for the performance of that trust.

The like must be remembered in the very manner of our duties. How diligently should a minister study. How earnestly should he persuade. How unweariedly should he bear all oppositions and ungrateful returns; and how carefully should he watch over each particular soul of his charge, (as far as is possible,) when he remembers that he must shortly be accountable for all in judgment? And how importunate should we all be with sinners for their conversion, when we consider that we ourselves also must shortly be judged? Can a man be cold and dead in prayer that hath any true apprehension of that judgment upon his mind, where he must be accountable for all his prayers and performances. Oh! remember, and seriously remember, when you stand before the minister to hear the word, and when you are on your knees to God in prayer, in what a manner that same person, even yourselves, must shortly stand at the bar of the dreadful God! Did these thoughts get thoroughly to men's hearts, they would waken them out of their sleepy devotions, and acquaint them that it is a serious business to be a Christian. How careful should we be of our thoughts and words if we believingly remembered that we must be accountable for them all! How carefully should we consider what we do with our riches, and with all that God giveth us, and how much more largely should we expend it for his service in works of piety and charity, if we believingly remembered that we must be judged according to what we have done, and give account of every talent that we receive! Certainly the believing consideration of judgment might make us all better Christians than we are, and keep our lives in a more innocent and profitable frame.

The eleventh direction: 'As you will certainly renew your failings in this life, so be sure that you daily renew your repent-

ance, and fly daily to Christ for a renewed pardon, that no sin may leave its sting in your souls.' It is not your first pardon that will serve the turn for your latter sins. Not that you must purpose to sin, and purpose to repent when you have done, as a remedy, for that is an hypocritical and wicked purpose of repenting, which is made a means to maintain us in our sins, but sin must be avoided as far as we can, and repentance and faith in the blood of Christ must remedy that which we could not avoid. The righteousness of pardon in Christ's blood is useful to us only so far as we are sinners, and cometh in where our imperfect inherent righteousness doth come short, but must not be purposely chosen before innocency. I mean, we must rather choose, as far as we can, to obey, and be innocent, than to sin and be pardoned, if we were sure of pardon.

The twelfth direction: In this vigilant, obedient, penitent course, with confidence upon God as a father, rest upon the promise of acceptance and remission, through the merits and intercession of him who redeemed you; look up in hope to the glory that is before you, and believe that God will make good his word, and the patient expectation of the righteous shall not be in vain. Cheerfully hold on in the work that you have begun; and as you serve a better master than you did before your change, so serve him with more willingness, gladness, and delight. Do not entertain hard thoughts of him, or of his service, but rejoice in your unspeakable happiness of being admitted into his family and favour through Christ. Do not serve him in drooping dejection and discouragement, but with love, and joy, and filial fear. Keep in the communion of his saints, where he is cheerfully and faithfully praised and honoured, and where is the greatest visible similitude of heaven upon earth, especially in the celebration of the sacrament of Christ's supper, where he seals up a renewed pardon in his blood, and where, unanimously, we keep the remembrance of his death, until he come. Do not cast yourselves out of the communion of the saints, from whom to be cast out by just censure and exclusion is a dreadful emblem, and forerunner of the judgment to come, where the ungodly shall be cast out of the presence of Christ and his saints for ever.

I have now finished the directions, which I tender to you for your preparation for the day of the Lord; and, withal, my whole discourse on this weighty point. What effect all this shall have upon your hearts the Lord knows: it is not in my

power to determine. If you are so far blinded and hardened by sin and Satan, as to make light of all this, or coldly to commend the doctrine, while you go on to the end in your carnal worldly condition as before, I can say no more, but tell thee again that judgment is near, when thou wilt bitterly bewail all this, too late. And among all the rest of the evidence that comes in against thee, this book shall be one which shall testify to thy face, before angels and men, that thou wast told of that day, and intreated to prepare.

But if the Lord shall show thee so much mercy as to open thy eyes, and break in upon thy heart, and, by sober consideration, turn it to himself, and cause thee faithfully to take the warning that hath here been given thee, and to obey these directions, I dare assure thee from the word of the Lord, that this judgment, which will be so dreadful to the ungodly, and the beginning of their endless terror and misery, will be as joyful to thee, and the beginning of thy glory. The Saviour that thou hast believed in, and sincerely obeyed, will not condemn thee. (Psalm i. 5, 6; Rom. viii. 1; John iii. 16.) It is part of his business to justify thee before the world, and to glorify his merits, his kingly power, his holiness, and his rewarding justice, in thy absolution and salvation. He will account it a righteous thing to recompense tribulation to thy troublers, and rest to thyself, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power. Even then shall he come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe, in that day, even because his servants' testimony, and his spirits among them, was believed. (2 Thess. i. 6—10.) That day will be the great marriage of the Lamb, and the reception of thee and all the saints into the glory of thy beloved, to which they had a right at their first consent and contract upon earth: and when the bridegroom comes, thou who art ready shalt go into the marriage, when the door shall be shut against the sleepy, negligent world; and though they cry "Lord, Lord, open to us," they shall be repulsed with a "Verily, I know you not." (Matt. xxv. 10—13.) For this day, which others fear, mayest thou long, and hope, and pray, and wait, and comfort thyself in all troubles with the remembrance of it. (1 Cor. xv. 55—58; 1 Thess.

iv. 17, 18.) If thou were ready to be offered to death for Christ, or when the time of thy departing is at hand, thou mayest look back on the good fight which thou hast fought, and on the course which thou hast finished, and on the faith which thou hast kept, and mayest confidently conclude, that, henceforth there is laid up for thee "a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give thee at that day: and not to thee only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." (2 Tim. iv. 6—8.) "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." (Rev. xxii. 20.)