

**WHAT LIGHT MUST SHINE
IN OUR WORKS.**

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MATTHEW v. 16.

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

THE work designed for this time is to resolve this practical case, 'What is that light which must shine before men in the works of Christ's disciples for the glorifying of God?'

But the explication of the text is therein included.

The Son of Righteousness, Jesus Christ, who "giveth light to every one that cometh into the world," or, coming into the world, giveth light to all, from his fulness hath bespangled the inferior heavens, his church, with many refulgent stars, appointed freely to communicate the heavenly light which they had freely received. In his corporeal presence he prepared them; and his Spirit having moved on the darkened world, he irresistibly said, at the descent of the Holy Ghost, "Let there be light, and there was light, beginning at Jerusalem, but not fixed to any determinate place; but what he gave them necessarily and antecedently they were to exercise as free agents, by a command more resistible, which he here gives them. Having told them their office, and given them their names, ver. 14., "Ye are the lights of the world," he next tells them how they must be useful. They must be conspicuous, 1. Because the church where they are placed "is like a city on a hill which cannot be hid." 2. Because it is the end of him that lighteth them, and sets them up, not to put them under a bushel, but on a candlestick, to give light to all his house. And therefore no men's silencing or prohibitions, no difficulties or sufferings, will excuse them from their duty: lights they are, and shine they must; but lest they should think that it is preaching only which he meaneth, he here, commanding them their duty, lets them know that the splendour of Christianity is in works as well as words; and

thereby giveth us cause to think that it is all his disciples, or Christians, that he speaketh to, though first and eminently to the apostles and teachers of the world.

1. By "light" he meaneth both the illuminating knowledge, which must be uttered by words, and the splendour or glory of holiness which must be refulgent in their lives.

2. He calls it "your" light, as being their own in his graces, as the subjects, and their own in exercise, as the actors, though both under him.

3. It must "shine," that is, appear in its splendour, for the illumination and conviction of the world.

4. It must "so" shine as is fittest to attain these ends: it is not every twinkling that will answer their great obligations.

5. It must be "before men;" that is, both those within, and especially those without the church, that are but men.

6. It must be a light shining in "good works," and their own works: for that is the grand difference between the disciples of Christ and others. He teacheth them not only to know and talk well, but to do well; and he maketh men such as he teacheth them to be: "Non magna loquimur, sed vivimus," said Terullian.

7. "That men may see," doth signify both the necessary refulgent quality of their works, and also the end of God and them.

8. But it is not hypocritical ostentation of what they are not, nor of what they are and have, as for their own glory, to be honoured and praised of men, but for the glorifying of God.

Who is called "their Father," to show their obligation to him, and to encourage them by the honour and comfort of their relation, and to show why their works will tend to the glorifying of God, even because they are so nearly related to him.

And he is said to be "in heaven," because there he appeareth operatively in his glory to the beautifying [beatifying] of holy spirits. As the soul is said to be in the head, and we look a man in the face when we talk to him, as if there principally we saw the man; because it is in the head that it operateth by reason. So much of the meaning of the words.

Many doctrines the text affordeth us: as,

1. Christ's disciples are the lights of the world, both in the splendour of wisdom and holiness.

2. Their most eminent and convincing splendour is in their good works.

3. Their light and good works are their own, though by the grace of Christ ; and it is no injury to Christ, or his righteousness, or grace, to say, that they are their own.

4. The splendour of Christians in their good works must be such as may be seen of men.

5. The glorifying of God must be the end of our good works, and of their appearance unto men.

6. As bad as corrupted nature is, there is yet something in mankind which tendeth to the approving of the good works of Christians, and to their glorifying God thereupon.

7. God is glorified even by common men, when they approve of the glory of holiness in believers ; it is not only by saints that God is glorified.

8. As contrary as holiness is to corrupted nature, there is such resplendent goodness in true Christians' works, which common men may glorify God for : and so somewhat in them, and in Christianity, which hath such agreeableness as may tend to further good.

9. The excellency and splendour of the good works of Christians, especially teachers, is a grand means, ordained by God himself for the conviction of the world, and the glorifying of God.

But the resolving the question, What the splendour of these works must be, is my present undertaken task.

God is not glorified by our adding to him, but by our receiving from him ; not by our making him greater, or better, or happier than he is, but by owning him, loving him, and declaring him as he is, that we and others may thereby be wise, and good, and happy.

He is his own glory, and ours ; and by his own light only we must know both him and all things. We are not called to bring our candle to show the world that there is a sun, but to persuade them into its light, to open the windows and curtains, to disperse the clouds, and to open the eyes of blinded sinners.

I. The way of doing this, and glorifying God, is in the order following.

1. The first thing that our works must show is their own goodness ; they can never prove the cause good until it is clear that they are good themselves ; therefore, doubtless, Christ here intendeth that we must abound especially in those good works which the world is capable of knowing to be good, and not only in those which none but Christians themselves approve. If

believers and unbelievers agreed in no common principles, we were not capable of preaching to unbelievers, nor convincing them, nor of conversing with them. There are many excellent things which nature doth approve, and which both parties are agreed to be good; by the advantage of these, as granted principles, we must convince them of the conclusions which they yet deny; and not as the scandalous Christian, so absurdly affect singularity, as to make light of all good which is taken for good by unbelievers, and to seek for eminency in nothing but what the world thinks evil. There is a glory in some good works, which all do honour, and which manifesteth itself.

2. And then the goodness of the work doth manifest the goodness of the doer. Every man's work is so far his own, that he is related to it, and by it, either as laudable, or as culpable; as it is Gal. vi. 4, 5; "Let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another; for every man shall bear his own burthen." God himself will judge men according to their works; and so will men; and so must we (much) do by ourselves; for it is the rightest judging which is likest God's.

This subordinate honour God grants to his servants:

If their works were not an honour to them, as the next agents, they could be none to him in their morality, as man's acts; though they might, as acts in general, be ordered to good by his own goodness. If God's natural works of creation (sun, and moon, and earth, &c.) were not praiseworthy in themselves, God would not be praised for them as their Maker. There are works that God is said to be dishonoured by; (Rom. ii. 23, 24;) and what are they but such as are really bad, and a dishonour to the authors? It is so far from being true, that no praise, or honour, or comfort from good works, is to be given to man; that God himself is not like else to be honoured by them as morally good, if the actors be not honoured by them; the world must first be convinced that Christians are far better than other men, and the righteous more excellent than his neighbour, before they will glorify God as the author of their goodness. In God's own judgment, "Well done," is the first word, and "Good and faithful servant," is the second, and "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord," is the third.

Two sorts of scandalous persons rob God of his honour in his saints.

1. Those that professing Christianity live wickedly, or, at least,

no better than other men ; whose lives tell the world that Christians are but such as they.

2. Those that slander and belie true believers, and would hide their goodness, and make them odious to the world.

As for them that say only that we have no righteousness in ourselves by which we can be justified, I shall not differ with them, if they do but grant that all shall be judged according to their works ; and that he that is accused as an infidel, impenitent, an hypocrite, or an unregenerate, ungodly person, must against that accusation be justified by his own faith, repentance, sincerity, and holiness, or be unjustified for ever.

3. The next thing to the work, and the person that is hereby honoured, is the christian religion itself, with the Spirit's operations on the souls of Christians ; the outward doctrine and example of Christ, who teacheth his servants to be better than the world ; and the inward sanctification of the Spirit, which maketh them better. The air and food are commended which make men healthy, and the medicines are praised which cure the disease ; that is accounted good, as a means and cause which doth good, and which maketh men good ; if Christians were more commonly and notoriously much better than all other men, the world would believe that the gospel and the christian religion were the best.

But when scandalous Christians appear as bad, or worse than infidels, the world thinks that their religion is as bad, or worse, than theirs.

4. The next ascent of honour is to the Maker or Author of our religion ; the world will see that he is good that maketh so good a law and gospel, and that maketh all his true disciples so much to excel all other men. And here the first honour will be to the Holy Spirit, which reneweth souls, and maketh them holy ; and the next will be to the Son, our Saviour, who giveth us both the word and Spirit ; and the highest or ultimate glory will be to God the Father, who giveth us both his Son and his Spirit.

And thus honour ascendeth to the highest by these steps, and the world beginneth at that which is nearest to them, and reason will proceed by these degrees ; 1. The excellent holy lives of Christians are better than those of other men. 2. Therefore Christians are better than other men. 3. Therefore their religion is the best, or the word and work which make them such. 4. Therefore the Spirit is good which makes them good ; the Saviour is good who giveth them the word and Spirit, and God,

the Fountain of all, even the Father of mercies, is the Fountain of all good, and consequently the end of all. And thus God is known and glorified by our works.

II. The works which thus glorify him are first to be described in general, and then enumerated in special.

I. In general, 1. They must be such as make or show men to be in their places like to God; they must be such as represent the particular perfections of God, which are called his communicable attributes; and such as declare his relations to us; and such as declare his attributes, as so related, and his works.

As, 1. We must so live that men may see that indeed we take not ourselves to be our own, but God to be our absolute owner; and that it is not ourselves, but he, that must of right dispose both of us and ours, and that we willingly stand to his disposal. (1 Cor. vi. 19.) "Ye are not your own."

2. We must so live as may declare that we are not lawless, nor the mere servants of men, but the resolved subjects of God, the sovereign King of all; and that really we are ruled by his laws and will, and not by our own lusts or wills, nor by the wills of any, but as under him; and that we fear not any hurt to the flesh, or them that can but kill the body, in comparison of that one Lawgiver and Judge, who is able to save or destroy for ever; (Luke xii. 4; James iv. 12; 1 Cor. vii. 23;) and that we are moved more by his promises, than by all that mortal men can give us; and trust wholly to the heavenly reward of glory, and not to the transitory prosperity of this world, believing that God is true and just, and none of his word shall never fail. (1 Peter i. 3.) "We are begotten again unto a lively hope, through the resurrection of Christ to an inheritance incorruptible," &c.

3. We must so live as may declare that God is our grand benefactor, from whom we have all the good that ever we received, and from whom we hope for all that ever we shall possess; and that he is infinitely good, the original and end of all created good: we must live as those that believe that we are made for God, even to glorify him, and please his blessed will; not by making him beholden to us, but by a willing receiving of his mercies, and a willing improvement of them to our own felicity; and as those that believe that his love is better than life itself, and that to know him, and love him, and glorify him for ever, is the ultimate end and happiness of man. (Psalm iv. 7, 8, and lxxiii. 3, and lxxiii. 25, 26, 28; Phil. iii. 7, 8; Matt. vi. 33; 1 Peter i. 5, 6, 8, 9; 2 Cor. v. 1.)

2. And we must so live in relation to Christ, and to his Spirit,

as may declare to the world that the mercy of the Father is conveyed to us by the Son, and the grace of the Father and the Son by the Spirit; and what wonders of wisdom, goodness and power, truth and justice, holiness and mercy, are manifest in Christ, and his mediation to mankind. (Gal. ii. 20; Eph. iii. 16, 17; Phil. i. 20, 21; John xvii. 10.)

3. In some the works that glorify God must have these three parts of his likeness upon them.

1. They must be works of light, like the light which from the Father of lights doth illuminate us. Christians must be much wiser than the men of the world, in holy, though not in worldly things. (Col. i. 9, 28, and iii. 16.) Darkness is the state of Satan's kingdom, and ignorant Christians are scandalous, and a dishonour to Christ; not those that are ignorant of unnecessary, unprofitable, or unrevealed things but those that are ignorant of revealed, necessary, saving truths. (1 Cor. iii. 2; Heb. v. 11, 12.)

2. They must be works of holy love to God and man, which show that God and goodness have our hearts, and that we would imitate God in doing good to all, according to our places and power. (Gal. vi. 10; Rom. xiii. 10—12.)

3. They must be works of life and power, where serious diligence expresseth zeal; and that we set ourselves no lower bounds, than with all our heart, and mind, and might. (2 Tim. i. 7; Rom. xii. 11.) Thus much for the general description of them.

II. The description of a Christian, whose works glorify God, according to scripture and experience, may be given you in the following particulars.

I. He is one that placeth his saving religion in the practical knowledge of the only true God, and Jesus Christ the Saviour, whom he hath sent. (John xvii. 3.) He puts no limits to his endeavours after useful knowledge, but what God hath put by his word or providence; he would abound in holy wisdom, and thinks it worth his greatest diligence, and is still upon the increasing hand; he hath so much knowledge of the lesser matters of religion, as to keep him from scandalous miscarriages about them; but it is the knowledge of God, and of a crucified and glorified Christ, in which he taketh wisdom to consist. (John xvii. 3; 1 Cor. ii. 2.) This is the light in which he hath his daily conversation, the light which governeth his will and practice, which feedeth his meditations, his prayers, and his discourse; which repelleth his temptations, which maintaineth his hope, and is his daily work of recreation, his food, and feast.

For they will now perceive. 1. That his religion is not a matter of names and words, and trifling controversies, but hath the greatest and most excellent subject in the world; and as nature teacheth all to reverence God, so it will tell them that they must reverence that religion, that conversation, and that person, who is most divine, and where the most of God appeareth.

2. And they will see that his religion consisteth not in uncertainties, which no man can be sure of when he hath done his best; but in things so sure as none should doubt of; which will easily bring men over to consent, and shame or silence contradicters.

3. And then they will see that it is a religion which all sober persons are united in, and doth not lose its authority or reverence, by the divisions, wranglings, and digladiations of sects of different minds; for God is denied by no sober man, nor the essentials of christianity by any true Christian.

4. And men will see that our religion is no matter of indifferency, which one may do well enough without, but of absolute necessity to salvation, and that which man was made and redeemed for; and a religion of the greatest subject, the greatest certainty, the greatest consent, and the greatest necessity, will honour itself and its author in the world, if it be rightly represented in the lives of them that do profess it.

But when men's overdoing shall pretend that all this is too little, and shall seek to raise it, as to more perfection, by their own inventions, or uncertain opinions in doctrine, worship, church-discipline, or practice, they presently cast it as a football before the boys in the streets, and make it a matter of doubtful, endless disputations, of multiplied sects, of pernicious contentions, and cruel persecutions; and then the reverence and glory of it is gone, and every philosopher will vie with it in subtilty, and every stranger will presume to censure it, if not to blaspheme it, and deride it. And thus overdoers are the scandals of the world.

II. The Christian that will glorify God, and his profession, must be conscionable in the smallest matters, but he must ever describe and open the nature of his religion, as consisting in great and certain things, and not talk too much of smaller matters, as if it were those that men were to be saved by. Tell men of the necessity of believing, fearing, obeying, trusting and loving God, and of coming to him by Jesus Christ, the great Mediator between God and man; tell them of the intrinsic evil of

sin, and of God's justice, and of man's corruption, and of the nature and excellency of holiness, and of the necessity of being new-born of the Holy Spirit, and of mortifying the desires and deeds of the flesh; and tell them of judgment, heaven, and hell, especially the certainty and excellency of the everlasting promised glory; persuade them to believe all this, to think much of all this, and to be true to what they know, and to make it the work of life to be always prepared for death. Let this be your discourse with sinners, (as I told you in the first character it must be your own religion,) and then men will perceive that religion is a matter that doth indeed concern them, and that they are indeed great and necessary things in which you differ from ungodly men; but the scandalous Christian talketh most of external church orders, and forms, and opinions, and parties, and thereby maketh the ignorant believe that the difference is but that one will sit when the other kneeleth; and one will pray by the book, and the other without book; and one is for this church government, and another for that; and one for praying in white, and the other in black. And talking too much of such things as these deceiveth the hearers; some it maketh formal hypocrites, who take up this for their religion, and the rest it hardeneth, and maketh them think that such people are only more humourous, and self-conceited, and giddy, and factious than others, but no whit better.

III. The genuine Christian hath an humble and cautelous understanding; sensible when he knoweth most how little he knoweth, and how much he is still unacquainted with, in the great mysterious matters of God. His ignorance is his daily grief and burden, and he is still longing and looking for some clearer light. Not a new word of revelation from God, but a clearer understanding of his word. He knoweth how weak and slippery man's understanding is, and he is humbly conscious of the darkness of his own. Therefore he is not conceitedly wise, nor a boaster of his knowledge; but saith, as Paul, (1 Cor. viii. 2,) "If any man think that he knoweth any thing (that is, is proudly conceited of his own knowledge,) he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know."

And hence it is that though he daily grow in the firmer apprehension of necessary truths, yet he is never confident and peremptory about uncertain, doubtful things; and therefore he is not apt to be quarrelsome and contentious, nor yet censorious against those that differ from him in matters of no greater

moment. And hence it is that he runneth not into sects, nor burneth with the feverish dividing zeal, nor yet is scandalously mutable in his opinions; because, as one that is conscious of his ignorance, he doth not rashly receive things which he understands not, but suspendeth his judgment till evidence make him fit to judge; and joineth with neither of the contending parties, till he is sure to know, indeed, which of them is right: and thus he avoideth that dishonouring of religion which the scandalous Christian is wofully guilty of; who, with an unhumbléd understanding, groweth confident upon quick and insufficient information, and judgeth before he understandeth the case, and before he hath heard or read, and considered, what on both sides may be said, and what is necessary to a true understanding. And thus, either by audacious prating of what he never understood, or reviling and censuring men wiser than himself, or by making himself a judge where he hath need to be many years a learner, or making a religion of his own mistakes, and setting up dividing sects to propagate them, or else by shameful mutability and unsettledness he becometh a scandal to harden unbelievers, and a disease to the church, and a shame to his profession; read James iii. 15—17. Conceited wisdom kindleth a contentious zeal, and is not of God, but from beneath.

IV. The Christian who glorifieth God by his religion is one that so liveth that men may perceive that his carnal interest is not the end and ruler of his life; but that God is his end, and to please him is his work and his reward, in which he is comforted, though the flesh and the world be never so much displeaséd; and that the perfect light and love of God in the unseen glory of another life is the sanctifying sum of all his hopes, for which all the world must be forsaken. To talk much of heaven, and to be as much and eager for the world as others, is the way by which the scandalous hypocrite doth bring religion into contempt. It is no high, nor very honourable work, to talk of the vanity of the world; but to live above it, and to be out of the power of it: nor is it any great matter to speak honourably of heaven; but to live as believing seekers of it, and as those that have there their treasure and their hearts, (Matt. vi. 20, 21,) and are comforted more by the hopes of the life to come, than by all their possessions or pleasures in the world. If we will glorify God, our lives must persuade men that he will certainly be our everlasting portion, and the sure and plentiful rewarder of them that diligently seek him. (Heb. xi. 6.) It is

much of the use of a true Christian's life to convince unbelievers that there is a heaven for saints; and the scandalous worldling persuadeth them that there is none. (Matt. v. 5, 11, 12; Phil. iii. 26, 21; Col. iii. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.)

V. Therefore it glorifieth God and our religion when Christians live in greater joy, or at least in greater contentedness and peace than other men. When they can answer all the crosses in the world sufficiently with this, that "God is their God, and his love shall be their endless joy;" (Psalm lxxiii. 1, and lxxxiii. 25, 26;) and when they can live by faith, and not by sight; (2 Cor. v. 7;) and can rejoice in hope of the glory of God; (Rom. v. 3, 5;) and can comfort themselves and one another with this, that they shall for ever be with the Lord; (1 Thes. iv. 17, 18;) and can trust him to the death, who hath said, I will never fail thee, nor forsake thee. (Heb. xiii. 5.) If you would have other men honour your God and your religion, and desire to be such as you, you must really show them that you are on safer grounds, and in a happier state than they; and that you will hardly do, if you be not more comfortable than they, or at least settled in more peace and contentedness of mind, as those that have a certain cure for the fears of death, and the danger that ungodly men are in of the revenging justice of the final Judge.

I confess it is possible for trembling, troubled, and distressed Christians to be saved. But O that they knew what a scandal they are to unbelievers, and what a dishonour to God, whom their lives should glorify! What man will fall in love with terrors and unquietness of mind? If you would glorify God by your fears and tears, they must be such as are accompanied with faith and hope; and you must not only show men what would make you happy, if you could obtain it, but also that it is attainable. Happiness is every man's desire, and none will come to Christ unless they believe that it tendeth to their happiness; they take up with the present pleasures of the flesh, because they have no satisfying apprehensions of any better. And if no man show the first fruits of any better here, they will hardly believe that they may have better hereafter; it is too hard a talk to put a poor drunkard, fornicator, or a poor, covetous worldling on, to believe that a poor, complaining, comfortless Christian is happier than he; and that so sad and unquiet a life must be preferred before all his temporal contentments and delights. You must show him better, or the signs and fruits of better,

before he will part with what he hath : you must show him the bunch of grapes, if you will have him go for the land of promise, when he is told of giants that must be overcome : and O what a blessing is reserved for every Caleb and Joshua, that encourage souls, and glorify the promise ! And how much do dejected discouragers of sinners dishonour God, and displease him ! I have known some ungodly men, when they have seen believers rejoicing in God, and triumphantly passing through sufferings in the joyful hopes of glory, to sigh and say, ' would I were such a one, or in his case ;' but I have seldom heard any say so of a person that is still sad, or crying, or troubling themselves and others with their scruples, crosses, or discontents ; unless it be in respect to their blameless living, perhaps condoling them, they may say, ' would I had no more sin to trouble me than you have.' I confess that some excellent Christians do show no great mirth in the way of their conversation ; either because they are of a grave and silent temper, or taken up with severe studies and contemplations, or hindered by bodily pains or weakness. But yet their grave and sober comforts, their peace of conscience, and settled hopes, and trust in God, delivering them from the terrors of death and hell, may convince an unbeliever that this is a far better state than the mirth and laughter of fools in the house of feasting, and in the vanities of a short prosperity. The grave and solid peace and comfort of those that have made their calling and election sure is more convincing than a lighter kind of mirth. (John. xvi. 22.)

VI. The dominion of love in the hearts of Christians, appearing in all the course of their lives, doth much glorify God and their religion ; I mean a common hearty love to all men, and a special love to holy men, according to their various degrees of loveliness. Love is a thing so agreeable to right reason, and to social nature, and to the common interest of all mankind, that all men commend it ; and they that have it not for others, would have it from others : who is it that loveth not to be loved ? and who is it that loveth not the man that he is convinced loveth him, better than him that hateth him, or regardeth him not ? And do you think that the same course, which maketh men hate yourselves, is like to make them love your religion ? Love is the powerful conqueror of the world ; by it God conquereth the enmity of man, and reconcileth to himself even malignant sinners ; and by it he hath taught us to conquer all the tribulations and per-

secutions by which the world would separate us from his love ; yea, and to be more than conquerors through him that loved us, and thereby did kindle in us our reflecting love, (Rom. viii. 34—36,) and by it he hath instructed us to go on to conquer both his enemies and our own ; yea, to conquer the enmity rather than the enemy, in imitation of himself, who saveth the sinner, and kills the sin ; and this is the most noble kind of victory. Every soldier can end a fever, or other disease, by cutting a man's throat, and ending his life ; but it is the work of the physician to kill the disease, and save the man. The scandalous pastor is for curing heresy in the Roman way, by silencing sound preachers, and tormenting and burning the supposed heretics ; or, at least, to trust for the acceptance and success of his labours to the sword ; and if that which will restrain men from crossing the pastor, would restrain them from resisting the spirit of God, and constrain them to the love of holiness, it were well ; then the glory of conversion should be more ascribed to the magistrate and soldier than to the preacher. But the true pastor is armed with a special measure of life, light, and love, that he may be a meet instrument for the regenerating of souls, who by holy life, and light, and love, must be renewed to their father's image. Every thing naturally generateth its like, which hath a generative power. And it is the love of God which the preacher is to bring all men to that must be saved ; this is his office, this is his work, and this must be his study ; he doth little or nothing if he doth not this. Souls are not sanctified till they are wrought up to the love of God and holiness. And, therefore, the furniture and arms which Christ hath left us in his word are all suited to this work of love. We have the love of God himself to preach to them ; and the love of an humbled, dying, and glorified Redeemer ; and all the amiable blessings of heaven and earth to open to them ; and all the loving promises and invitations of the gospel ; and must not our hearts, our ministry, and our lives be answerable to all this ? Believe it, it must be a preacher, whose matter and manner of preaching and living doth show forth a hearty love to God, and love to godliness, and love to all his people's souls, that is the fit instrument to glorify God by convincing and converting sinners. God can work by what means he will ; by a scandalous, domineering, self-seeking preacher, but it is not his ordinary way. Foxes and wolves are not nature's instruments to generate sheep. I never knew much good done to souls by any pastors but such as

preached and lived in the power of love, working by clear convincing light, and both managed by a holy, lively seriousness. You must bring fire if you kindle fire. Trust not here to the Cartesian philosophy, that mere motion will turn another element into fire. Speak as loud as you will, and make as great a stir as you will, it will be all in vain to win men's love to God and goodness, till their hearts be touched with his love and amiableness ; which usually must be done by the instrumentality of the preacher's love. Let them hate me, so they do but fear me and obey me, is the saying of such as set up for themselves, (and but foolishly for themselves,) and, like Satan, would rule men to damnation. If love be the sum and fulfilling of the law, love must be the sum and fulfilling of our ministry. But yet by love I mean not flattery ; parents do love as necessarily as any, and yet must correct ; and God himself can love and yet correct ; yea, he chasteneth every son that he receiveth ; (Heb. xii. 6, 7 ;) and his love consisteth with paternal justice, and with hatred of sin, and plain and sharp reproof of sinners ; and so must ours ; but all as the various operations of love, as the objects vary.

And what I say of ministers, I say of every Christian in this place. Love is the great and the new commandment, that is, the last which Christ would leave, at his departure, to his disciples. O could we learn of the Lord of love, and Him, who calleth himself love itself, to love our enemies, to bless them that curse us, and to do good to the evil, and pray for them that hurt and persecute us, we should not only prove that we are genuine Christians, the children of our heavenly father ; (Matt. v. 44, 45 ;) but should heap coals of fire on our enemies' heads and melt them into compassion and some remorse, if not into a holy love. I tell you it is the Christian who doth truly love his neighbour as himself ; who loveth the godly as his co-heirs of heaven, and loveth the ungodly with a desire to make them truly godly ; who loveth a friend as a friend, and an enemy as a man that is capable of holiness and salvation. It is he that liveth, walketh, speaketh, converseth, yea, suffereth, which is the great difficulty in love, and is, as it were, turned, by the love of God shed abroad upon his heart, into love itself ; who doth glorify God in the world, and glorify his religion, and really rebuke the blasphemer, that derideth the Spirit in believers, as if it were but a fanatical dream.

And it is he that by tyranny, cruelty, contempt of others, and

needless, proud singularities and separations, magisterially condemning and vilifying all that walk not in his fashion, and pray not in his fashion, and are not of his opinion, where it is like enough he is himself mistaken, that is the scandalous Christian, who doth as much against God, and religion, and the church, and men's souls, as he doth against love. And though it be Satan's way, as an angel of light, and his ministers way, as ministers of righteousness, to destroy Christ's interest by dividing it, and separating things that God will have conjoined, and so to pretend the love of truth, and love of order, as the love of godliness, or discipline, against the love of souls, and to use even the name of love itself against love, to justify all their cruelties, or censures, and alienations; yet God will keep up that sacred fire in the hearts of the sound Christians which shall live and conquer these temptations, and they will understand and regard the warning of the Holy Ghost. (Rom. xvi. 17.) "I beseech you mark them which cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which you have learned, and avoid them," (in their sinful, dividing, offensive ways,) "for they that are such serve not the Lord Jesus," (though they may confidently think they do,) "but their own bellies," or carnal interests, though, perhaps, they will not see it in themselves; "and by good words, and fair or flattering speeches, deceive the hearts of the simple." The word is τῶν ἀκάνων, hominum minime malorum, no bad men, or harmless, well-meaning men; who in case it be not to mortal errors, perhaps, may be in the main sincere, and may be saved when their stubble is burnt; but whether sincere or not, they are scandals in the world, and great dishonourers of God, and serve Satan when they little think so, in all that they do contrary to that universal love, by which God must be glorified, and sinners overcome.

VII. A public mind that is set upon doing good, as the work of his life, and that with sincere and evident self-denial doth greatly glorify God in the world. As God maketh his goodness known to us by doing good, so also must his children do. Nothing is more communicative than goodness and love; nothing will more certainly make itself known whenever there is opportunity. That a worldly barren love, which doth not help, and succour, and do good, is no true Christian love, St. James hath told us fully in his detection of a dead and barren faith. No man in reason can expect that others should take him for a good man, for something that is known to no one

but himself, save only that public converse and communion must be kept up by the charitable belief of professions, till they are disproved. The tree is known by its fruits, and the fruits best by the taste, though the sight may give some lower degree of commendation. The character of Christ's purified, peculiar people, is, that they are zealous of good works. (Tit. ii. 14.) The scandalous Christian may be zealous against others, and zealous to hurt them, to persecute them, to censure them, to disparage them, and to avoid them, but the genuine Christian is zealous in loving them, and doing them all the good he can. To do a little good upon the by, and from a full table to send an alms to Lazarus at the door, yea, to give to the needy as much as the flesh can spare, without any suffering to itself, or any abatement of its grandeur, pomp, and pleasure in the world, will prove you to be men not utterly void of all compassion, but it will never prove you to be Christians, nor better than infidels and heathens. Look not that men should think you better than your fruits do manifest you to be, nor that they take you to be good for saying that you are good, nor judge you to excel others any further than your works are better than others. And marvel not if the world ask, 'What do you more than others?' when Christ himself doth ask the same. (Matt. v. 47.) "If ye salute your brethren, and those of your own opinion and way, and if ye love them that love you, and say as ye say, do not even publicans and infidels do the same?" (Matt. v. 46.) Marvel not if men judge you according to your works, when God himself will do so, who knoweth the heart. He that is all for himself, may love himself, and think well of himself, but must not expect much love from others. Selfishness is the bile or imposthume of societies, where the blood and spirits have an inordinate afflux, till their corruption torment or gangrene the part. While men are all for themselves, and would draw all to themselves, instead of loving their neighbour as themselves, and the public good above themselves, they do but hurt and destroy themselves, for they forfeit their communion with the body, and deserve that none should care for them, who care for none but themselves. To a genuine Christian, another's good rejoiceth him as if it were his own, (and how much, then, hath such an one continually to feed his joy,) and he is careful to supply another's wants as if they were his own. But the scandalous, selfish hypocrite doth live quietly, and sleep easily, if he be but well himself,

and it go well with his party, however it go with all his neighbours, or with the church, or with the world. To himself, he is fallen, to himself he liveth, himself he loveth, himself he seeketh, and himself, that is, his temporal prosperity, he will advance and save, if he can, whatever his religion be, and yet himself he destroyeth, and will lose. It is not well considered in the world, how much of sin consisteth in the narrow contraction of men's love, and regard unto their natural selves, and how much of goodness consisteth in a community of love, and what a glory it is to the government and laws of God that he maketh it so noble and necessary a part of every man's duty, to love all men, and to do good to all, as he is able, though with a difference. God could do us all good enough by himself alone, without one another. But what a mercy is it to the world, that as many persons as there are, so many there are obliged by God to love their neighbours as themselves, and to do good to all about them? And what a mercy is it to the actor that God will thus make him the instrument and messenger of his beneficence?

Ministers and Christians all, would you be thought better than others? Are you angry with men that think otherwise of you? What good do you more than others in your places? What good do you that other men can see, and feel, and taste, and judge of? Every man loveth himself, and can feel what doeth him good in natural things; and God, by giving you food, and other mercies to your bodies, would have you therein taste his love to your souls, would use you just so for your brethren's good. Do you give them good words and counsel? It is well. But that is not it that they can yet taste and value. You must do that sort of good for them which they can know and relish; not that this will save them, or is any great matter of itself, no more than God's common bodily mercies to you, but this is the best way to get down better. And he that seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up the bowels of his compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? (1 John iii. 17.) "Give to him that asketh, and from him that would borrow of thee, turn not thou away." (Matt. v. 42.) That is, let not want of charity hinder thee, at any time, from giving, though want of ability may hinder thee, and prudence may restrain thee, and must guide thee. If you say, alas! we have it not to give. I answer, 1. Do what you can. 2. Show by your compassion, that you would, if you could, take care of

your poor brethren. 3. Beg of others for them, and put on those that can to do it.

Say not these carnal people value nothing but carnal things, and cannot perceive a man's love by spiritual benefits, for it is not grace, but the means and outside of things spiritual that you can give them; and for aught I see, the most of us all do very hardly believe God's own love to us, if he deny us bodily mercies. If you languish in poverty, crosses, and painful sickness anything long, your murmuring showeth that you do not sufficiently taste God's goodness without the help of bodily sense. And can you expect that natural men believe you to be good for your bare words, when you so hardly think well of God himself, though he promise you life eternal, unless he also give you bodily supplies?

VIII. He that will glorify his religion, and God, before men, must be strictly just in all his dealings; just in governing, just in trading and bargaining, just to superiors and to inferiors, to friends and to enemies, just in performing all his promises, and in giving every man his right. He that in love must part with his own right for his neighbour's greater good, must not deprive another of his right, for charity includeth justice, as a lower virtue is included in a higher and more perfect. He must not be unjust for himself, for riches, or any worldly ends; he must not be unjust for friends or kindred; he must not be drawn to it by fear or flattery; no price must hire them to do an unrighteous deed. But above all, he must never be unjust as for religion, as if God either needed or countenanced a lie, or any iniquity. No men are more scandalous dishonourers of religion, and of God, than they that think it lawful to deceive, or lie, or be perjured, or break covenants, or be rebellious, or use any sinful means to secure or promote religion, as if God were not able to accomplish his ends by righteous means. This cometh from atheism and unbelief, when men think that God will lose his cause, unless our wits and sinful shifts preserve it, as if we, and not he, were the rulers of the world. The unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God, (1 Cor. vi. 9,) and seldom escape the hatred or contempt of men.

IX. He that will glorify God, must know and observe the order of commands and duties, and that God will have mercy, and not sacrifice, and must prefer the end before the means as such. He must not pretend a lesser duty against a greater, nor take the lesser at that time for a duty, but for a sin, when

the greater should take place. God hath made his laws, and our duty, to be the means of our own good. It is no profaneness, but duty, to omit that which else would be a duty, when a greater is to be preferred. God calls it the sacrifice of a fool, who knoweth not that he doeth evil under the name of duty, when sacrifice is preferred before an obedient hearing of God's commands. (Eccles. v. 1—3.) It was no want of holy zeal in Christ, which made him bid the unreconciled, "Leave thy gift at the altar, and first go and be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." (Matt. v. 24.) Some zealous persecutors, censurers, and dividers, now, would think I speak like an ungodly person if I should say to them, 'Let your liturgy, and your prayers, and your worship stay till you have confessed and lamented your injuries to your brethren, and then come and offer your service to God, and lift up pure hands to him, without wrath and doubting.' Yet is it no more than God often calls for to the hypocritical Jews. (Isa. i. 11, &c.) "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices, when ye come and appear before me? Who hath required this at your hands, to tread in my courts? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination to me. When ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes; when ye make many prayers, I will not hear. Your hands are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean, relieve the oppressed." (Isa. lviii. 2, 3, &c.) "They seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinances of their God; they ask of me the ordinances of justice; they take delight in approaching to God. Wherefore have we fasted, and thou seest not? Have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge? Ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness. Ye shall not fast as this day, to make your voice to be heard on high. Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the Lord? Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out, to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him, and that thou hide not thyself from thy own flesh? Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thy

health shall spring forth speedily, and thy righteousness shall go before thee, and the glory of the Lord shall be thy reward. Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, here I am."

It is a point that our Lord Jesus layeth a great stress upon. He purposely healeth on the Sabbath day, and tells the censorious pharisees "the sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath;" that is, the end, which is man's good, is to be preferred before the means; nay, it is no means, and so no duty, which is against it. He defendeth his disciples for getting themselves food as they passed in the corn-fields; and he teacheth them the lawfulness of the priest's labour on the Sabbath, and of David's eating the shew-bread; and at two several times doth tell them that God "will have mercy, and not sacrifice;" and biddeth them "go learn what that meaneth." (Matt. iv. 13, and xii. 7.)

And it is not only Pharisees, but many better men, who have need to go learn the meaning of that sentence. The meaning is this, that (*cæteris paribus*), the great duties of the law of nature, are to take place before the positive institutions. God's institutions are for man's good: whatever is a duty is also a means to the happiness of man, and pleasing to God, which is the end of all. Love to God and man are greater than all the instituted means of them as such; therefore that is no duty which is no means, or is against the instituter's end. Preaching and prayer must be omitted for some works of love and human good. Discipline is a duty when it is a means to the end for which it is ordained; but when it would hinder or destroy that end (the reputation of religion, and the glory of God's holiness, and the church's good) it is no duty, but a sin. To omit a sacrament, to break the rest of the Lord's day, to forbear the sacred assemblies, may be a duty when the good of men requireth them. Ordination is a duty when it is a means to its proper end. But if it were pleaded against those ends, and order set against the thing ordered, even the work of the ministry, the case would be altered.

When men mistake, and mistime and misplace God's institutions, to the excluding of the great moral duties, which are their end, and persuade men to that as a part of religion, which would certainly do more hurt than good, they scandalously drive men away from their religion. Thus imprudent, scandalous professors can backbite and reproach others, and make them

odious and destroy christian love, and peace, and concord, on pretence of zeal for order, government, ceremonies, forms, or for this or that mode of discipline or worship. Not having learned what this meaneth, "I will have mercy and not sacrifice;" nor, that forms and external institutions were made for man, and not man for them. And yet I know that this will not justify the familist or hypocrite, who thinks he may do any thing to save his flesh.

Do you think it is not a scandal to Turks, or other infidels, tempting them to deride or hate Christianity, to find the papists placing their merits in hurtful pilgrimages, which waste that time which should be spent, and in a multitude of unprofitable ceremonies, and in unwholesome food, and injuries to health, under the names of abstinence and mortification? By this rule they may next persuade us, that it will please God if men famish or hang themselves; and consequently if they do so by others, for we must love our neighbour but as ourselves. God himself hath made all our religion so suitable to our good, that he expecteth not that we should take any thing for our duty, but what he giveth us evidence in the thing, or security by his promise, shall be our gain. He that worketh upon self-love, and winneth man by a Saviour, and a glorious reward, and proveth the goodness of all his word and ways, as to our happiness, hath instituted none of his ordinances to our hurt. The apostles had their power only to edification, and not the destruction or hurt of souls. (2 Cor. x. 8. and xiii. 10.) "Let all things be done to edifying" (1 Cor. xiv. 26,) is a word of greater comprehension and use than many do conceive. When it is against edification, it is not acceptable to God. One would think Christ had broken his own law of discipline when he did familiarly eat with publicans and sinners: and yet that very act of his is one of those which he justifieth by the aforesaid rule, "I will have mercy, and not sacrifice." (Matt. ix. 11—13.) Learn this lesson of preferring mercy before sacrifice, if ever you will glorify God.

The right manner of worshipping God is of great moment to the honour of him and of our religion before the world: that we give no false descriptions of God, or dishonourable attributes: that we teach no dishonourable doctrine as his, especially of his own will and counsels, and of his government, laws, and judgment: that we neither take down the glory of the gospel mysteries, by reducing them to the rank of common Providence, nor yet be deceived by Satan or his ministers, as the

promoters of light and righteousness, (2 Cor. xi. 15,) to abuse and dishonour them by over-doing : that we seek not to glorify God by our lies, or by our own mistaken interpretations or inventions. God must be worshipped as a Spirit, in spirit and truth, and not with popish toys and foppesies, which make others think that our religion is but like a poppet-play and ludicrous device, to keep the people in servitude to the priests by a blind devotion. God must be worshipped rationally, and with holy wisdom, and not with childish shadows and trifles, nor with slovenly and imprudent words, which tend to breed in the hearers derision or contempt. Neither the cantings or scenical actions, or affected repetitions of the Papists, nor the rude, disorderly, incongruous expressions of unskilful men, are fit to be offered to the glorious God. Prudence, and holiness, and seriousness, and reverence, must appear in that worship which must honour God. O with what holiness should we hear from and speak to the holy, holy, holy God ! who will be sanctified in all that draw near him, (Lev. x. 3,) and will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain ! They that will do it acceptably must serve him with reverence and godly fear, (Heb. xii. 28,) as knowing that he is a "consuming fire;" and yet, with alacrity, love, and delight, as knowing that in his favour is life, and that he is the infinitely amiable good, the hope and only portion of believers.

XI. The humility, meekness, and patience of Christians are greatly necessary to their glorifying of God. I join all three together for brevity's sake.

1. It is a thing very amiable in the eyes of all, when men have not too high thoughts of themselves, and seek not to be overvalued by others, either as great, or wise, or good. When they seek not precedence, preferment, or honour, but take the lowest place, and envy not the precedence or honour of others, but take another's honour as their own, and take another to be fitter (*cæteris paribus*) for places of power, trust, or eminency, than themselves. When they do, according to the measure of their worth, honour all men, (1 Peter ii. 17,) "And are kindly affectioned one to another in brotherly love, in honour, preferring one another;" (Rom. xii. 10;) not dissemblingly and complementally saying, 'Your servant, Sir,' while they would fain have others below them, and to be obedient to their wills. But really to think meanly of their own worth and wisdom. (Rom. xii. 3.) "For I say, through the grace given to me, to every

man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. Not thinking himself something when he is nothing;" (Gal. vi. 3;) nor to be more learned, or wise, or pious than he is. We must be, indeed, his disciples, who humbled himself, and made himself of no reputation;" (Phil. ii. 7, 8;) and wiped and washed the feet of his disciples, to teach them what to be and do to one another; who hath taught us the necessity of cross-bearing and self-denial, and to humble ourselves as little children, if ever we will enter into the kingdom of heaven; (Matt. xvi. 24, and xviii. 3, 4;) and hath decreed and foretold us that whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted; and therefore the greatness which his ministers must seek must be to be he servants of the rest. (Matt. xxiii. 11—13.) "Honour shall uphold the humble in spirit, but a man's pride shall bring him low." (Prov. xxix. 23.) "Better is it to be of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoils with the proud." (Prov. xvi. 19.) He that will honour his religion must "put on, as the elect of God, bowels of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, (not of tongue only,) meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any." (Col. iii. 12, 13.) He must not set out himself like the richest, and desire to seem high or notable to others, nor set up himself with his superiors, nor swell or grudge, if he be not regarded or taken notice of: no, nor if he be reproved or dishonoured: but must learn of an humbled Christ to be meek and lowly; (Matt. xi. 29;) and must not mind or desire high things, but condescend to men of low estate, and not be wise in his own conceit. (Rom. xii. 16.) "I beseech you, therefore, that you walk worthy the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love." (Eph. iv. 1, 2.) "Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves." (Phil. ii. 3.) What man loveth not such a spirit and conversation? O that it were more common and eminent among us, and then we should find that the disaffection of the ignorant would be much abated, and that when a man's ways thus please God, his enemies will be the more at peace with him. (Prov. xvi. 7.) But when they are proud, and we are proud, and we cannot yield, nor bow, nor give place to the wrathful, but must

jostle and contend with them for our place and honour, we lose our christian honour by seeking carnal honour, and appear to be but like other men; and even the proud themselves will disdain the proud.

2. And though we may be angry and not sin, and must be plain and zealous against sin, and for God; though guilty, galled sinners be displeased by it, yet meekness must be our temperate; for a turbulent, rough, unquiet spirit, is displeasing both to God and man; such persons have seldom peace with others or themselves. "A meek and quiet spirit is in the sight of God of great price. (1 Pet. iii. 4.) "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth; they shall speed better than others, even in this world." (Matt. v. 5.) "The wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits." Paul tells us what the good works are which we must be always ready to; "To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers; but gentle, showing all meekness to all men. (Tit. iii. 1, 2.) The Scripture speaks more of this than I have leisure to recite. (See, Gal. v. 23, and vi. 1; 1 Tim. vi. 11; 2 Tim. ii. 25; 1 Pet. iii. 15; Jam. iii. 13; Zeph. ii. 3; Isa. xxix. 19; Psalm cxli. 4, and lxxvii. 9, and cxlvii. 6, and xxxvii. 11.)

3. And patience both towards God and man is a necessary companion of humility and meekness. This greatly differeth from natural dulness, and an insensible temperature. When a man's soul is partly so much awed by God's authority and presence, and partly so much taken up with the great matters of his service, and partly so much contented with his favour and grace, and the hopes of glory, as to make light of all the interests of the flesh as such; and therefore to bear patiently such losses and crosses, and wants; and sufferings, as touch the flesh, as taking it for no great matter to lose all the world if we save our souls, this is true patience by which God is glorified. For by this men will see that Christians have indeed such great things in their hopes, as set them quite above the transitory things of the flesh and the world; but when they are much troubled at every cross and loss, and whine and complain as if they were undone, if they live in poverty and reproach; and are at their wit's end in every danger, and fret and storm at every ill word, or every one that wrongeth them, they are the shame of their profession, and scandals to the world. It is not a sudden anger which is the

great sin of impatience ; but an impotent disability to suffer in the flesh, in estate or name, and a repining under every want, which showeth a fleshly, worldly mind, and a want of true believing the heavenly felicity ; though I confess that pity must make some excuse for many poor women, whose natural temper maketh their passions, troubles, and fears invincible. He that said, " In your patience possess your souls," doth intimate, that we have lost ourselves, and the government, order, and peace of our souls, when we have lost our patience. (Luke xxi. 19 ; See Eccl. vii. 8 ; Jam. v. 7, 8 ; 1 Pet ii. 20 ; 1 Thes. v. 14.) " Be patient towards all men." (1 Tim. vi. 11 ; Col. i. 11.) Whatever zeal you seem to have in prayer, in preaching, and for purity of worship, if you can bear wants and sickness and the loss of all the world no better than others, you will appear no better in their eyes ; for " if you faint in the day of adversity, your strength is small." (Prov. xx. 10.)

XII. And as a special fruit of humility, an easy and thankful bearing of reproof, and readiness to confess a fault upon due conviction, is a necessary duty to the honouring of God. It will show men that you are enemies to sin indeed, and that you are not hypocrites who weed not only their neighbours' fields, and see the mote in another's eye, and not the beam which is in your own. " If the righteous smite us by reproofs, it must be taken as a kindness, and as a precious balsam which doth not break our head, but heal us. (Psalm cxli. 5.) Not that we are bound to belie ourselves in compliance with every man's censorious humour that will accuse us ; but we must be readier to censure ourselves than others, and readier to confess a fault, than to expect a confession from others whom we reprove. Sincerity and serious repentance will be honourable in that person who is most careful to avoid sin, and most ready penitently to confess it when he hath been overcome, and truly thankful to those that call him to repentance ; as being more desirous that God, and his laws and religion, have the glory of their holiness, than that he himself should have the undue glory of innocency, and escape the deserved shame of his sin.

It is one of the most dangerous diseases of professors, and greatest scandals of this age, that persons taken for eminently religious, are more impatient of plain (though just) reproof, than many a drunkard, swearer, or fornicator : and when they have spent hours or days in the seeming earnest confession of

their sin, and lament before God and man that they cannot do it with more grief and tears, yet they take it for a heinous injury in another that will say half so much against them, and take him for a malignant enemy of the godly who will call them as they call themselves. They look that the chief business of a preacher should be to praise them, and set them above the rest, as the only people of God; and they take him for an enemy that will tell them the truth. But the scandal is greatest in those preachers themselves, who cannot endure to hear that they are sinners. So tender and impatient of reproof are some, yea, some that for their learning, and preaching, and piety, are ranked in the highest form, or expect to be so, that almost nothing but flattery or praise can please them; and they can hardly bear the gentlest reproof, no, nor a contradiction of any of their opinions; but they seem to tell men that it is their part and privilege to be the reprovers of others, and to have no reprovèr, and to tell other men of sin, and be themselves accounted innocent; and to call other men to repentance for particular sins, while they themselves must have no other repentance, than in general to say that they are sinners; and to proclaim to all that their public confessions are formalities, and that it is a Christ to heal the souls of others that they preach, while they acknowledge but little work for his remedies on themselves. But he that "refuseth reproof doth err, and he that hateth it is brutish," however learned, or reverend, or pious he would be accounted. (Prov. xi. 17, and xii. 1.) "He that regardeth reproof is prudent, and he that hateth it shall die." (Prov. xv. 5—10.) As ready humble penitent confession of sin doth tend to our pardon from God, so doth it tend to our acceptation with man. When God and man will condemn the pharisee, that justifies himself till confession be extorted from him.

XIII. It is another very honourable fruit of humility to have a learning disposition, and not to be magisterial; and to be swift to hear, and slow to speak. All Christ's disciples must be as little children, (Matt. xviii. 3, 4;) especially in a learning teachable, disposition, a child doth not use to set his wit against his master's, or any other that will teach him, nor to rise up against instruction, as a disputer that must have the better, and be accounted the wisest, but his daily business is submissively to learn. A genuine Christian is indeed communicative, and willing that others should partake with him in the wisdom and happiness which God hath revealed to him. But he is ready first to learn

himself, and knoweth that he must receive before he can communicate : and there is none so far below him but he is willing to hear and learn of ; but especially among his equals he is readier to hear and learn than to teach, because he is still conscious of his ignorance, and honoureth the gifts of God in others, which the proud despise. (Jam. iii. 1, and i. 19.)

But the scandalous Christian is so wise in his own eyes, that he is ever of a teaching humour, and those please him best that will sit and hear, and reverence him as an oracle, and magnify every word that drops from his lips. He is so full of himself, that he hath scarce the patience to observe well what another speaks or writeth ; and so valueth his own conceptions, that he thinks they should be valued by the hearers : and so scandalous is the teaching humour of some learned men, that they have not the common good manners or civility to suffer another to speak to the end, but they must needs interrupt him, that they may speak, as being more worthy. They take other men's speeches to be so tedious, that their patience cannot hold out the length of them. I mean not that a wise man is bound to lose his time in hearing every self-conceited person talk ; but when men are engaged in conference, or disputes, for a man to have such list to speak, that he cannot stay till another (though long) come to the end, is a scandalous incivility ; yea, some can scarce stay till two or three sentences be uttered, but their haste must tell you that they take themselves to be much the wiser, and to be fitter to teach than to hear and learn. And they are so overladen with their own conceited wisdom, that they can carry it no longer without some vent ; and so full of their own, that they have no room to receive any more from others : and being all masters, they receive from God and man the greater condemnation. (Jam. iii. 1 ; Prov. xii. 17, and i. 5, and xviii. 13.)

XIV. The genuine Christian hateth backbiting, and disgraceful reports of others, and yet can bear it from others to himself. He hath learned to love all, and to speak evil of no man, nor to receive or vend ill reports of others. He knoweth that this is the work of the devil, the mortal enemy of love. He modestly rebuketh the backbiting tongue, and, with an angry countenance, driveth it away. (Psalm xv. 3 ; Tit. iii. 2 ; Prov. xxv. 23.) Backbiters tell us that they are haters of men ; and the Apostle joins them with haters of God ; (Rom. i. 30.) Debates, backbitings, whisperings, envyings, are the scandalous Christian's

work. (2 Cor. xii. 20.) He that heareth them will either distaste them, or catch the disease, and be as bad as they. And he that heareth that he is calumniated or reproached by them behind his back is tempted to abhor both them and their profession. But to deal with men as faithful friends, and in plainness (but with prudence and love), to tell them secretly of their defects and faults, this tendeth to good, and to reconcile the minds of men, at last, and to the honour of the Christian way. (Matt. xviii. 15, 16; Levit. xix. 17; Prov. ix. 8, and xxiv. 25, and xxvii. 5; Eccl. vii. 5; Prov. xxviii. 23.)

But yet, when we are belied and reproached of ourselves, though by Christians, or teachers, or superiors, it beseebeth us not to make too great a matter of it, as being tender of our own reputation, but only to be sorry for the slanderer's or backbiter's sin and misery. For men's corruption will have vent; the angry and malicious, and envious, will speak from the abundance of their hearts; and the guilty will be tender; and children will cry and quarrel; and proud contenders will be impatient. And how small a matter is it, as to us, to be judged of man, who must all be shortly judged of the Lord!

XV. He is one that would keep open to the notice of all the great difference between the godly and the wicked; and aspireth after the highest degrees of holiness, as knowing the corruptions and calamities of the weak, and how much of heaven is in holiness itself; and yet, he loveth, honoureth, and cherisheth the least spark of grace in the weakest Christian; and is none of them that censoriously despise such, nor that tyrannically tread them down, or cast them injuriously out of the church.

1. To make men believe that there is little difference between the holy and profane, is to bring all religion into contempt, and is a wickedness which God's laws throughout condemn, and his judgment shall publicly confute. (Matt. iii. 18; 2 Thess. i. 6—11; Jude xv.; Matt. xiii. 25, throughout.)

2. To take up with a little goodness, which consisteth with scandalous corruptions, is to be a scandal in the church.

3. And yet to be supercilious, and to disdain the weak, or shut out any as ungodly, whom Christ hath not warranted us to shut out, and to make stricter rules of trial and Church communion than he hath made, this is justly displeasing both to God and man. It tempteth men to abhor that religion which tendeth more to men's reproach than to their cure, and

causeth professors to set themselves higher above the weak, and at a greater distance from their neighbours than God would have them. Christ is tender of little ones, and would not have them scandalised. His own apostles were very low in knowledge all the time that he was with them on earth. It is not mere want of words that will warrant us to take men for ungodly; even he that is "weak in faith must be received, but not to doubtful disputations." (Rom. xiv. 15.) To cull out a few that have learned to speak better than the rest, and shut out with the dogs all the infant Christians, who must be fed with milk, because they want expressions, is one of Satan's ways of overdoing, by which he would banish religion out of the world.

XVI. He that will glorify God by his good works must be zealous and diligent in them, and make them the serious business of his life; he must live so that men may see that indeed he doth believe and hope for heaven. That which a man coldly speaks of, and coldly seeketh, men will think he coldly desireth; and therefore that he doth but doubtingly believe it. A cold slothful Christian proclaims his unbelief to others, and so inviteth them to the like. When Christians bestir themselves, as for their lives, and ply God's work with greatest diligence, and redeem their lives, as knowing that all is short enough to prepare for an endless life, this wakeneth others to life and thoughtfulness, to inquire into the matter of our hopes.

XVII. He that will glorify God must be wise and watchful, to see and take the opportunities of good before they are passed by, and to avoid temptations to error and iniquity, and especially temerity in matters of great and public consequences.

1. Good works have their season. You lose them if you take them not in their time; that may be done now, which if you pass this time you can never do.

2. Temptations have their season, and must just then be resisted, lest many a year repair not an hour's loss; and they are very many: and narrow-sighted careless persons, who avoid two, and fall into the third, or avoid nineteen and are conquered by the twentieth, are always scandalous.

3. And rash adventures on any opinions or actions, but especially of public consequence, are usually most scandalous and pernicious to the church. As in military affairs, and in physic, *ubi non licet bis errare*, men's lives must pay for our teme-

riety and error, and all the world cannot remedy the effects of one mistake; so in matters of religion, if we mistake by our rash conceitedness, and take not time for necessary trial, and proceed not as a man on the ice, or among quicksands, with great care and deliberation, the shaking of kingdoms, the ruin of churches, the silencing of ministers, the corruption of doctrine, worship, and discipline, and the sin and damnation of many souls, may be the effect of our proud presumption and temerity; but the humble self-suspecting man, that suspendeth his judgment and practice, till he hath thoroughly proved all, doth preserve the honour of religion, and avoid such late and dear repentance.

XVIII. The man whose works shall glorify God, must be devoted to the unity and concord of believers, and be greatly averse to dividing and love-killing opinions, words, and practices; and, as much as in him lies, he must live peaceably with all men. (1 Cor. i. 10; Phil. ii. 1—3; Eph. iv. 3, 4, 14, 15, 16; Rom. xvi. 17, and xii. 18; 1 Thes. v. 17; John xvii. 24.) When Paul saith that "Dividers serve not the Lord Jesus, but their own bellies," he intimateth to us, that though truth and purity be in their mouths, and really intended by them, as they take it, yet there is usually a secret self-interest that is carried on that biaseth the judgment. And when he telleth them, (Acts xx. 30,) that "of their own selves should men arise, speaking perverse things," which they called (and it is like believed to be) the truth; yet self-interest lay at the bottom, to be somebody in drawing disciples after them; for it is so notorious a truth, that unity and concord are indispensably necessary to the church, as it is to our body, to families, to kingdoms, that men could not do so destructive a thing as dividing is, if some sin had not first caused the error of their minds. It greatly honoureth Christ and religion in the world, when believers live in love and unity: and their discords and divisions have in all ages been the scandal of the world, and the great reproach and dishonour of the Church. When Christ's disciples are one in him, it is the way to the infidel world's conversion, that they may believe that the father sent him. (Job xvii. 24.)

And here the devil has two sorts of servants: 1. The true schismatic, or heretic, who fearlessly and blindly divideth the churches. 2. The overdoing papist, and church-tyrant, who will have a greater unity than Christ will here give us, that so we may have none. And when Christ prays that we may be

one in him, the pope saith that we shall also be one in him, or we shall be accounted schismatics, and destroyed as such. And when the ancient church, according to Christ's institution, united all in the baptismal covenant, explained in the creed, and Paul numbereth the necessary terms of unity, Eph. iv. 4—6.

1. One body (or church of Christ) into which we are baptized. 2. One spirit of holiness in all. 3. One hope of the glorious reward. 4. One Lord by whom we do attain it. 5. One faith, even christian verity. 6. One baptism, or covenant of christianity. 7. And one God and Father of all. And in these God would have all his servants to be one; then come in these overdoers, and they must have us to be all one in all their papal policy, and all the decrees of their Pope and Councils *de Fide*, and in their multitude of corruptions, and ceremonious impositions: which is as much as to say, 'You shall have no unity;' for he that saith to all the city or kingdom, you shall be destroyed for discord, or reproached as dividers, if you are not all of one complexion, or have not all the same appetite, age, or bodily stature, doth pronounce reproach or destruction on them absolutely: so is it with all others that put their self-devised terms on their brethren as necessary to unity and peace, on how pious or fair pretences soever; impossible conditions make the thing impossible. These are the church-tearing scandals. These are the snares by which Satan hath made the church a scorn, and our religion a stumbling-block to Turks and heathens; but had the peace-makers been heard, who learned of the Holy Ghost (Acts xv,) to impose nothing on the brethren but necessary things, and who have laboured to revive love, and shame emulations and divisions, God had been more glorified by men, and the reproach of the churches and solemn assemblies taken away. When all sects and parties have bustled and raised a dust in the world to foul the church, and to blind each other; if ever the church's glory be restored, and our shame taken away, it will be by men of love and peace, by healing, uniting, reconciling principles and means.

XIX. He that will glorify God, must live in and to the will of God, and seek to reduce his own will wholly into God's, and to destroy in himself all will that striveth against God's will.

1. The disposing will of God, our owner, must be absolutely submitted to, and the hounteous will of God, our benefactor, thankfully and joyfully acknowledged.

2. The ruling will of God our lawgiver must be with daily

study and care obeyed, and his punishing and rewarding justice glorified.

3. The final felicitating will and love of God, our ultimate end and object, that we may please him, and be everlastingly pleased in him, love him, and be loved by him, must be totally desired and sought, as the only and perfect rest of souls.

O ! that is the holy, the joyful, the honourable Christian, who daily laboureth, and in some good measure doth prevail, to have no will but the will of God, and that which wholly is resolved into it ; who looketh no further to know what he should do, but to know by his word what is the law or will of God : who believeth that all that God willeth is good, and had rather have his life, and health, and wealth, and friends, at God's will and disposal, than his own ; who knoweth that God's will is love itself, and that to please him is the end of all the world, and the only felicity of men and angels ; and resteth wholly in the pleasing of that will. What can be more wise and just than to have the same will (objectively) with him who is infinitely wise and just ? What can be more honourable than to have the same will as God himself, and (so far) as his children, to be like our Father ? What can be more orderly and harmonious, than for the will of the creature to move according to the Creator's will, and to be duly subservient to it, and accurately compliant with it ? What can be more holy, nay, what else is holiness, but a will and life devoted and conformed to the will of God ? What can be more safe, or what else can be safe at all, but to will the same things which the most perfect wisdom doth direct to, and infinite love itself doth choose ? And what can be more easy and quieting to the soul, than to rest in that will which is always good, which never was misguided, and never chose amiss, and never was frustrated, or missed of its decreed ends ? If we have no will but what is (objectively) the same with God's, that is, if we wholly comply with, and follow his will as our guide, and rest in his will as our ultimate end, our wills will never be disordered, sinful, misled, or frustrated. God hath all that he willeth (absolutely) and is never disappointed ; and so should we if we could will nothing but what he willeth. And would you not take him unquestionably for a happy man, who hath whatsoever he would have ? Yea, and would have nothing but what is more just and good ? There is no way to this happiness but making the will of God our will. God will not mutably change his will to bring it to ours ; should holiness itself be conformed

to sinners, and perfection to imperfection? But we must, by grace, bring over our wills to God's, and then they are in joint; and then only will they find content and rest. O what would I beg more earnestly in the world, than a will conformed wholly to God's will, and cast into that mould, and desiring nothing but what God willeth!

But contrarily, what can be more foolish than for such infants and ignorant souls as we, to will that which infinite wisdom is against? What more dishonourable than to be even at the very heart so contrary or unlike to God? What can be more irregular and unjust than for a created worm to set his will against his Maker's? What else is sin but a will and life that is cross to the regulating will of God? What can be more perilous and pernicious than to forsake a perfect, unerring guide, and to follow such ignorant judgments as our own in matters of eternal consequence? What can that soul expect, but a restless state in an uncomfortable wilderness, yea, perpetual self-veaxation and despair, who forsakes God's will to follow his own, and hath a will that doth go cross to God's? Poor self-tormenting sinners! consider that your own wills are your idols, which you set up against the will of God, and your own wills are the tyrants to which you are in bondage; your own wills are your prison, and the executioners that torment you with fear, and grief and disappointments. What is it that you are afraid of, but lest you miss of your own wills? For sure you fear not lest God's will should be overcome and frustrated; what are your cares about but this? What are your sighs, and groans, and tears for? And what is it else that you complain of, but that your own wills are not fulfilled? It is not that God hath not his will. What is it that you are so impatient of, but the crossing of your own wills? This person crosseth them, and that accident crosseth them, and God crosseth them, and you cross them yourselves; and crossed they will be while they are cross to the will of God; for all this while they are as a bone out of joint; there is no ease till it be set right. In a word, a will that is contrary to God's will, and striveth and struggleth against it, is the offspring of the devil, the sum of all sin, and a foretaste of hell, even a restless self-tormenter; and to will nothing but what God willeth, and to love his will, and study to please him, and rest therein, is the rectitude and only rest of souls; and he that cannot rest contentedly in the will of God must be for ever restless.

And when such a holy will and contentment appeareth in

you, mankind will reverence it, and see that your natures are divine ; and as they dare not reproach the will of God, so they will fear to speak evil of yours : when they see that you choose but what God first chooseth for you, and your wills do but follow the will of God, men will be afraid of provoking God against them as blasphemers, if they should scorn, deride, or vilify you. And could we convince all men that our course is but the same which God commandeth, it would do much to stop their reproach and persecution. And if they see that we can joyfully suffer reproach, or poverty, or pains, or death, and joyfully pass away to God when he shall call us, and live and die in a contented complacency in the will of God, they will see that you have a beginning of heaven on earth, which no tyrant, no loss, or cross, or suffering, can deprive you of, while you can joyfully say, "The will of the Lord be done." (Acts xxi. 14.)

Object. But if it be God's will for sin to punish me, or forsake me, should I contentedly rest in that revenging will ?

Ans. 1. That sin of ours which maketh us incapable objects of the complacent will of God is evil, and to be hated. But that will of God which is terminated on such an object, according to the nature of it, by just hatred, is good, and should be loved. And punishment is hurtful to us ; but God's will and justice is good and amiable. 2. If you will close with God's will you need not fear his will. If your will be unfeignedly to obey his commanding will, and to be and do what he would have you, his will is not to condemn or punish you. But if God's will prescribe you a holy life, and your will rebel, and be against it, no wonder if God's will be to punish you when your wills would not be punished. (John i. 13 ; Heb. x. 10 ; John vii. 17 ; Luke xii. 47.)

XX. It glorifieth God and religion in the world when Christians are faithful in all their relations, and diligently endeavour the sanctifying and happiness of all the societies which they are members of.

I. Holy families, well ordered, do much glorify God, and keep up religion in the world.

1. When husbands live with their wives in wisdom, holiness, and love, and wives are pious, obedient, meek, and peaceable, (Eph. v. 22, 25 ; Col. iii. 18, 19.) yea, unto such husbands as "obey not the word, that without the word may be won by the conversation of the wives." (1 Pet. iii. 1, 2.)

2. When parents make it their great and constant care and

labour, with all holy skill, and love, and diligence, to educate their children in the fear of God, and the love of goodness, and the practice of a holy life, and to save them from sin, and the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil; and have more tender care of their souls than of their bodies, that so the church may have a succession of saints; and when children love, honour, and obey their parents, and comfort them by their forwardness to all that is good, and their avoiding the ways and company of the ungodly. (Eph. vi. 1; Psalm i. 1, 2.)

3. When masters rule their servants as the servants of God, and servants willingly obey their masters, and serve them with cheerful diligence and trust, and are as careful and faithful about all their good and business as if it were not their own. (Eph. vi. 5, 9; Col. iii. 21, and iv. 1; 1 Pet. ii. 18.)

When the houses of Christians are societies of saints, and churches of God, and live in love and concord together, and all are laborious and faithful in their callings, abhorring idleness, gluttony, drunkenness, pride, contention, and evil-speaking, and dealing justly with all their neighbours, and denying their own right for love and peace; this is the way to glorify religion in the world.

II. Well-ordered churches are the second sort of societies which must glorify God and propagate religion in the world.

1. When the pastors are learned in the Holy Scriptures, and skilful in their sacred work, and far excel all the people in the light of faith and knowledge, and in love to goodness, and to men's souls, and in lively, zealous diligence for God, and for men's salvation, thinking no labour, cost, or suffering, too dear a price for the people's good; when no sufferings or reproaches move them, nor account they their lives dear to them, that they may but finish their course and ministry with joy. When their public preaching hath convincing light and clearness, and powerful, affectionate application; and their private oversight is performed with impartiality, humility, and unwearied diligence, and they are able to resolve the people's cases of conscience solidly, and to exhort them earnestly, with powerful reason, and melting love; this honoureth religion, and winneth souls.

When they envy not one another, nor strive who shall be greatest or uppermost; but contrariwise, who shall be most serviceable to his brethren, and to the people's souls. When they oversee and feed the flock of God which is among them, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a

ready mind ; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock ; and seeking not theirs, but them ; are willing to spend and be spent for their sakes ; yea, though the more they love them the less they are beloved ; not minding high things, but condescending to men of low estate ; this is the way for ministers to glorify God. (1 Pet. v. 1—4 ; Acts xx. ; 2 Tim. i. 14, 15 ; 1 Tim. iv. 10 ; Heb. iv. 11—13 ; Acts xx. 24 ; 1 Thes. ii. 8 ; 2. Tim. iv. 1—3 ; Luke xxii. 24—26 ; 2 Cor. xii. 14, 15 ; Rom. xii. 16.)

When ministers are above all worldly interest, and so teach and live that the people may see that they seek not the honour which is of men, but only that which is of God, and lay not up a treasure on earth, but in heaven ; and trade all for another world, and are further from pride than the lowest of the flock ; when they have not only the clothing of sheep, but their harmless, profitable nature, and not the ravenousness or bloody jaws of destroying wolves. When they use not carnal weapons in their warfare, but by an eminency of light, and love, and life, endeavour to work the same in others ; when they are of more public spirit than the people, and more self-denying, and above all private interests, and envyings and revenge, and are more patient in suffering than the people, through the power of stronger faith, and hope, and love. When they are wholly addicted to holiness and peace, and are zealous for the love and unity of believers, and become all things to all men to win some ; in meekness instructing opposers, abhorring contention, doing nothing in strife or vain glory, but preferring others before themselves ; not preaching Christ in pride or envy, nor seeking their own praise, but thirsting after men's conversion, edification, and salvation. Thus must Christ be honoured by his ministers in the world.

When they speak the same things, being of one mind and judgment, uniting in the common faith, and contending for that against infidels and heretics, and, so far as they have attained, walk by the same rule, and mind the same things ; and where they are differently minded or opinioned, wait in meekness and love till God reveal to them the reconciling truth. When they study more to narrow controversies, than to widen them, and are skilful in detecting those ambiguous words, and verbal and notional differences, which to the unskilful seem material. When they are as surgeons, and not as soldiers, as skilful to heal differences, as the proud and ignorant are ready to make them, and can plainly show the dark contenders, wherein they

agree, and do not know it. When they live in that sweet and amicable concord, which may tell the world that they love one another, and are of one faith and heart, being one in Christ. This is the way for ministers to glorify God in the world. And with thankfulness to God I acknowledge that such, for many years, I had my conversation with, of whom the world that now despiseth them is not worthy. (Phil. ii. 21; Matt. vi. 19—21; John v. 44; 2 Cor. x. 4; 2 Tim. ii. 25, 26; 1 Cor. ix. 19, 20, 22, and x. 33; Phil. ii. 1—3; 1 Tim. vi. 3, 4; Jam. iii. 14—16; 2 Tim. ii. 14, 24; Phil. iii. 15—17; John xvii. 24; Eph. iv. 3—5; 1 Cor. i. 10; James iii. 17, 18.)

And the maintaining of sound doctrine, spiritual, reasonable, and reverent worship, without ludicrous and unreverent trifling, or rudeness, or ignorance, or superstition, or needless singularity, much honoureth God (as is aforesaid). And so doth the exercise of holy discipline in the churches. Such discipline whereby the precious may be separated from the vile, and the holy from the profane, by authority and order; and not by popular usurpation, disorder, or unjust presumptions. Where the cause is fairly tried and judged before men are cast out, or denied the privileges of the church. Where charity appears in embracing the weakest, and turning away none that turn not away from Christ, and condemning none without just proof; and justice and holiness appeareth in purging out the dangerous leaven, and in trying and rejecting the obstinately impenitent heretic, and gross sinner after the first and second admonition, and disowning them that will not hear the church. (Matt. xviii. 15, 16; Tit. iii. 10; 1 Cor. v. 11.) When the neglect of discipline doth leave the church as polluted a society as the infidel world, and Christians that are owned in the public communion are as vicious, sensual, and ungodly, as Heathens and Mahometans, it is one of the greatest injuries to Christ and our religion in the world. For it is by the purifying of a peculiar people, zealous of good works, that Christ is known to be really the Saviour of the world; and by making his followers better than others, that he, and his doctrine and religion are known to be the best. Travellers tell me that nothing so much hindereth the conversion of the Mahometans as their daily experience that the lives of the Greek Christians, and others that live among them, are too ordinarily worse than theirs. More drunkenness, and more falsehood, lying, deceit, it is said are among those Christians than among the Turks. If that be true, those

are no true Christians; but we be to them by whom such offence cometh. I have oft heard those soldiers justly censured as profane who turn churches into stables (without great necessity). But how much more hurtfully profane are they who, for carnal ends, confound the world and the church, and keep the multitude of the most sensual, ungodly persons in their communion, without ever calling them personally to repentance! and use the church keys but to revenge themselves on those that differ from them in some opinions, or that cross their interest and wills, or that seem too smart and zealous in the dislike of their carnality, sloth, and church pollutions? When the churches are as full of scandalous sinners as the assemblies of infidels and heathens, the world will hardly ever believe that infidelity and heathenism is not as good as the christian faith. It is more by persons than by precepts that the world will judge of Christ and Christianity. And what men on earth do more scandalise the world, more expose Christianity to reproach, more harden infidels, more injure Christ, and serve the devil, than they that fill the church with impious, carnal pastors, (as in the church of Rome,) and then with impious, carnal people, maintained constantly in her communion, without any open disowning by a distinguishing, reforming discipline? When such pastors are no better than the soberer sort of heathens, save only in their opinion and formal words, and when their ordinary communicants are no better, it is no thanks to them if all turn not infidels that know them, and if Christianity be contemned, and decay out of the world; and it is along of such that disorderly separations attempt that discipline, and distinguishing of the godly and notoriously wicked, which such ungodly pastors will not attempt. (See Lev. xix. 17; Matt. xviii. 15, 16; 1 Cor. v; Tit. iii. 10; Jer. xv. 19; Psalm xv.; 2 Thes. iii; Rom. xvi. 17; 2 Tim. iii. 4, 5.)

III. But O how great an honour is it to God and to religion, when kings, princes, and states, do zealously devote their power to God, from whom they do receive it, and labour to make their kingdoms holy! When truth, sobriety, and piety have the countenance of human powers, and rulers wholly set themselves to further the faithful preaching and practising of the holy faith, and to unite and strengthen the ministers and churches, and to suppress iniquity, and to be a terror to evil doers, it taketh Satan's great advantage out of his hand, and worketh on carnal men by such means as they can feel and un-

derstand. Not that God needs the help of man, but that he hath settled officers and a natural order, by which he usually worketh in the world: and as it cannot be expected that an unholy parent and master should have a holy family, or an unholy pastor a holy church, unless by extraordinary mercy; no more can we expect that ungodly magistrates should have a godly kingdom or commonwealth, of which the sacred history of the Jewish and Israelitish kings doth give you a full confirmation. But this I must now say no more of. And thus I have told you, in twenty particulars, what are those good works in which the light of Christians must shine before men to the glorifying of God.

Object. Doth not Matt. v. 10—12, contradict all this? “Blessed are ye when men revile you and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake.”

Ans. No. You must here distinguish, first, of men; secondly, of righteousness and good works.

I. The men that we have to do with are, first, ordinary, natural men, corrupted by original sin, but yet not hardened to serpentine malignity, as some are: secondly, or they are men that, by sinning against nature and common light, are forsaken and given up to malignant minds.

II. The good works which natural light and human interest can discern and commend, do differ from those which are merely evangelical, of supernatural revelation.

1. Malignant persons hardened in enmity, will scorn and persecute holiness itself, and even that good which reason justifies, and therefore are called unreasonable wicked men. (2 Thess. iii. 2.) Good works with these men make us odious, unless they are such as gratify their lusts.

2. But there are natural men not yet so hardened and forsaken, who are usually them that the gospel doth convert: and these have not yet so blinded nature, nor lost all sense of good and evil, but that they honour him that doth good in all the twenty particulars which I have named, and think ill of those that do the contrary, though yet they relish not the christian righteousness, and things of supernatural revelation, for want of faith.

Let us briefly now apply it.

Use 1. This informs us what an honourable state Christianity and true godliness is. When God hath made us to be the lights of the world, to shine before men to the glory of his holiness, as the sun and stars do to the glory of his power, no wonder if

in glory we shall shine as stars in the firmament of our Father, if we do so here. (Dan. xii. 3 ; Matt. xiii. 43 ; Phil. ii. 15.) This must not make us proud, but thankful ; for our pride is our shame, and our humility is our glory.

Use 2. And what wonder if all the powers of darkness do bend their endeavours to obscure this sacred light ? The Prince of Darkness is the enemy of the Father of Lights ; and this is the great war between Christ and Satan in the world. Christ is the light of the world, and setteth up ministerial lights for the world and for his house. His work is to send them forth, to teach them, and defend them, to send his spirit to work in and by them, to bring men to the everlasting light. And Satan's work is to stir up all that he can against them, high and low, learned and unlearned, and to put Christ's lights, both ministers and people, under a bushel ; and to make the world believe that they are enemies, and come to hurt them, that they may be hated as the scorn and off-scouring of the world, and to keep up ignorance in ministers themselves, that the church's eyes being dark, the darkness may be great.

But let us pray that God would "forgive our enemies, persecutors, and slanderers, and turn their hearts ;" and that he would "open our lips, that our mouths may show forth his praise : " and though his ministers and people have their faulty weaknesses, that he would "be merciful to our infirmities, and grant that those things which the craft and subtlety of the devil or man worketh against us may be brought to nought, and by the providence of his goodness may be dispersed ; that we, his servants, being hindered by no persecution, may give thanks to him in his holy church, and serve him in holiness and pureness of life, to his glory," through Jesus Christ.

Use 3. You may see hence how much those men are mistaken, who talk of the good works or lives of Christians, as that which must have no honour, lest it dishonour God ; as if all the honour were taken from Christ which is given to good works, and the patient's health were the dishonour of the physician, when we are redeemed and purified to be zealous of good works, and created for them in Christ Jesus, as Titus ii. 14 ; Eph. ii. 10. Yea, and shall be judged according to our works.

Use 4. 'This informeth you that the good works or lives of Christians is a great means ordained by Christ for the convincing of sinners, and the glorifying of God in the world. Preaching doth much, but it is not appointed to do all. The lives of

preachers must also be a convincing light; and all true Christians, men and women, are called to preach to the world by their good works: and a holy, righteous, and sober life, is the great ordinance of God, appointed for the saving of yourselves and others. O that the Lord would bring this close to all our hearts! Christians, if you abhor dumb teachers, because they starve and betray souls, take heed lest you condemn yourselves: you owe men the convincing helps of a holy, fruitful life, as well as the preacher owes them his ministry. Preach by well doing, shine out in good works, or else you are no lights of Christ, but betrayers of men's souls: you rob all about you of a great ordinance of God, a great means appointed by him for men's salvation. The world will judge of the Scriptures by your lives, and of religion by your lives, and of Christ himself by your lives. If your lives are such as tend to persuade men that Christians are but like other men, yea, that they are but self-conceited sinners, as carnal, sensual, uncharitable, proud, self-seeking, worldly, envious, as others, and so that Christianity is but such, this is a horrid blaspheming of Christ, how highly soever your tongues may speak of him, and how low soever your knees may bow to him. O that you knew how much of God's great work of salvation in the world is to be done by Christians' lives. Your lives must teach men to believe that there is a heaven to be won, and a hell to be escaped: your lives must help men to believe that Christ and his word are true: your lives must tell men what holiness is, and convince them of the need of regeneration; and that the Spirit of sanctification is no fancy, but the witness of Jesus Christ in the world: your lives must tell men, by repentance and obedience, that sin is the greatest evil; and must show them the difference between the righteous and the wicked: yea, the holiness of God must be glorified by your lives. Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the Scripture, the church, and heaven itself, must be known much by our lives. And may not I say, then, with the apostle, (2 Peter iii. 11,) "What manner of persons, then, ought we to be, in all holy conversation and godliness, when the grace of God, which bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men, teaching us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world?" (Tit. ii. 11, 12.)

Use 5. But alas! what suitable and plentiful matter doth this offer us for our humiliation and lamentation on such a day as this? A flood of tears is not too much to lament the

scandals of the christian world. With what wounded hearts should we think of the state of the churches in Armenia, Syria, Egypt, Abascia, and all the oppressed Greeks, and all the poor deceived and oppressed Papists, and all the ignorant, carnal Protestants? O! how unlike are your lives to your christian faith, and to the pattern left them by their Lord. Doth a worldly, proud, and fleshly, and contentious clergy glorify God? Doth an ignorant ministry glorify him, who understand not the message which they should deliver? Will the world turn Christians by seeing Christians seek the blood and ruin of each other? and hearing even preachers reproach each other? or seeing them silence or persecute each other? or by seeing the people run into many sects, and separate from one another, as unworthy of christian communion? Will proud, ignorant, censorious, fleshly, worldly professors of religion ever draw the world to love religion? Or will peevish, self-willed, impatient, discontented souls, that are still wrangling, crying, and repining, make men believe that their religion rejoiceth, blesseth, and sanctifieth the soul, and maketh men far happier than all others in the world? Alas! what wonder that so small a part of the world are Christians, and so few converted to the love of holiness, when the great means is denied them by you which God hath appointed for their conversion, and the world hath not one helper for a hundred or thousand that it should have? You cry out at those that put out the church-lights, under pretence of snuffing them, while yourselves are darkness, or as a stinking snuff.

O, brethren and Christians all, I beseech you let us now, and often, closely ask ourselves, what do we more than an Antonine, a Seneca, or a Cicero, or a Socrates did, beyond opinions, words, and formalities? What do you which is like to convert the world, to convince an infidel, or glorify God! Nay, do not some among us think that it is the height, or part of their religion, to live so contrary to the world, as to be singular from others, even in lawful or indifferent things, and to do little or nothing which the world thinks well of? As if crossing and displeasing men needlessly were their winning conversation. O, when once we go as far beyond them in love, humility, meekness, patience, fruitfulness, mortification, self-denial, and heavenliness, as we do in opinions, profession, and self-esteem, then we shall win souls, and glorify God, and he will also glorify us.

Use 6. And here we see the wonderful mercy of God to the world, who hath appointed them so much means for their conviction and salvation. So many Christians as there be in the world, so many practical preachers and helps to men's conversion are there appointed by God, and let the blame and shame lie on us, where it is due, and not on God, if yet the world remain in darkness. It is God's will that every Christian in the world should be as a star, to shine to sinners in their darkness; and O then how gloriously would the world be bespangled and enlightened! If you say, 'why, then, doth not God make Christians better?' That is a question which cannot be well answered, without a larger opening of the methods of grace than we can now have leisure for, and therefore must be done in its proper season.

Use 7. Those that honour God he will honour, and therefore let us also give them that honour which is their due. The barren professors, who honour themselves by overvaluing their poor knowledge, gifts, and grace, and affecting too great a distance from their brethren, and censuring others as unworthy of their communion without reproof, are not the men that honour God, and can lay claim to no great honour from men. But God hath among us a prudent, holy, humble, laborious, patient ministry, that glorify him by their works and patience, and he hath among us a meek and humble, a blameless, and a loving and fruitful sort of Christians, who imitate the purity, charity, and simplicity, yea, and concord of the primitive church. These tell the world, to their sight and experience, that religion is better than ignorance and carnality. These tell the world, that Christ and his holy word are true, while he doth that in renewing and sanctifying souls, which none else in the world can do. These show the world, that faith, and holiness, and self-denial, and the hopes of immortality, are no deceits. These glorify God, and are the great benefactors of the world. I must solemnly profess, that did I not know such a people in the world, who, notwithstanding their infirmities, do manifest a holy and heavenly disposition in their lives, I should want myself so great a help to my faith in Christ, and the promise of life eternal, that I fear, without it, my faith would fail. And had I never known a holier ministry and people than those that live but a common life, and excel heathens in nothing but their belief or opinions, and church orders and formalities, I should find my faith assaulted with so great temptations as I

doubt I should not well withstand. No talk will persuade men that he is the best physician that healeth no more nor worse diseases than others do. Nor would Christ be taken for the Saviour of the world, if he did not save men. And he saveth them not if he make them not holier and better than other men.

O, then, how much do we owe to Christ for sending his Spirit into his saints, and for exemplifying his holy word on holy souls, and for giving us as many visible proofs of his holiness, power, and truth, as there are holy Christians in the world! We must not flatter them, nor excuse their faults, nor puff them up. But because the righteous is more excellent than his neighbour, we must accordingly love and honour them, and Christ in them. For Christ telleth us, that he is glorified in them here, (John, xvii. 10,) and that what is done to them, his brethren, even the least, is taken as done to him, (Matt. xxv.,) and he will be glorified and admired in them when he cometh in his glory at the last, (2 Thess. i. 8, 10,) and he will glorify their very works before all the world, with a "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter throu into the joy of thy Lord."