

when driven from Christ. He is now willing to receive the worst of you into his blessed train. "Behold, says he, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. Amen.

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*Ettrick, July 22, 1716.*

[Being the first Sabbath after dispensing the Lord's Supper.]

CAUTIONS AGAINST QUENCHING THE SPIRIT.

SERMON X.

1 THESSALONIANS V. 19.

*Quench not the Spirit.*

It may be reasonably thought, that it was not without some design, that God sent us the solemn ordinance, which we observed last Sabbath; and that the Spirit of the Lord was not idle among us, while the arrows of the word were flying in such numbers, along with the sacrament. Surely several were touched in one way or another. And if these things were rightly managed they might come to a good account. But alas! some as they get touches of the Spirit lightly without seeking, so they let them go as lightly. Others are at pains to earn something, and when got they put into a bag with holes. But whoever would have any lasting good in religion would do well to hearken to this exhortation. *Quench not the Spirit.* In these words, there is, 1. A holy fire supposed to be kindled in the souls of men. In Matthew iii. 11. John said of Jesus, *he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.* Here the Spirit is compared to fire, and in other places to water. This is not meant of the person of the Spirit who cannot be quenched, but of his gifts, operations, and motions, which are often quenched. It is thus expressed because the injury redounds to the Spirit himself.

2. Our duty with respect to this holy fire. Quench it not. Do not put it out or weaken it in the soul. More is understood. Cherish the Spirit, give fuel to this sacred fire, maintain and keep it in, and blow it up. Be concerned kindly to entertain the operations, and motions of the Spirit.

*Doctrins.*—It is the duty of all to take heed that they quench not the holy fire of the Spirit kindled in the soul, but that they nourish

and cherish it. To prepare this for application, which I chiefly design. I shall only,

- I. Give you some distinctions of quenching the Spirit.
- II. Shew how the Spirit is quenched.
- III. Offer reasons why we should not quench the Spirit. We are then,

I. To give some distinctions of quenching the Spirit.

1. There is a total and a partial quenching of the Spirit. A total quenching is when the Spirit is quite extinguished, his motions and impressions on the soul quite erased so as there remains not one spark among the ashes. Thus Saul and other graceless men have quenched the Spirit, and this ends in giving them up to the lusts of their own hearts. *My Spirit*, saith God, shall not always strive with men. And this Spirit departed from Saul.

A partial quenching is, When the Spirit is weakened, the force and vigour of his motions and impressions abated, and the fire brought to a very spark. Thus the godly may be guilty of quenching the Spirit. Thus David prayed, "Create in me a clean heart, O God: and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence: and take not thy holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation: and uphold me with thy free Spirit."

2. There is a wilful and a weak quenching of the Spirit.

The wilful quenching is when men resolutely set themselves to put out the holy fire, being resolved not to part with their lusts, they go on in opposition to their light, and strangle their uneasy consciences, and murder their convictions, that they may sin without control. "Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye." This is a dangerous case.

A weak quenching I call that which flows rather from weakness than wickedness, rather from carelessness than design. This is called grieving of the Spirit, Ephes. vi. 30. It is described, Song v. 2.—5.

3. There is a quenching of the Spirit in ourselves, or in others. The Spirit may be quenched in ourselves by ourselves. God sometimes kindles the holy fire in our hearts, and miserable, we put it out. For though we cannot kindle, we can extinguish it. Though we cannot open the door we can shut it. "For my people, saith the Lord, is foolish, they have not known me; they are sottish children, and they have none understanding: they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge." Like little children that can do the ill, but not the good.

We may quench the Spirit in others, even as one may put out the fire in another person's house. "But woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in." Thus ministers may quench the Spirit in people, and people in ministers. One member of a family in another, and one neighbour in another, by discouraging, vexing and oppressing them in what is good and holy, by which means their knees are enfeebled and their hands weakened in following the Lord in the way of duty. I now proceed,

II. To shew how the Spirit is quenched. This holy fire is quenched,

1. By doing violence to it, as when one puts his foot on the fire or casts water on it; or blows out a candle. So there is a doing violence to the Spirit, and thus the Spirit is quenched by sins of commission, especially such as are done with a high hand, and in opposition to light. By these the Spirit is grieved. As when one raises an offensive smoke in the room where his guest sits, he is grieved and departs: so the Spirit is grieved by the offensive smell arising from our raging corruptions.

2. The fire of the Spirit is quenched by the neglecting of it, as when one does not supply fuel to the fire, it will go out, though no violence be done to it. The lamp also will be extinguished if you feed it not with more oil. So the Spirit is quenched by neglecting his motions, not cherishing them, not walking in the light while we have it. For however briskly this wind blow, it will cease, if we do not spread out our sails and make way with it, for it will not blow to no purpose. We are now,

III. To give reasons why we should not quench the Spirit.

1. Because it is the holy fire; and therefore it ought to be kept carefully, and it is dangerous to meddle with it. It is fire from heaven, not the fire of God's anger, but of his Spirit. When the people saw the fire come down, Lev. ix. 24. *They shouted and fell on their faces.* They were filled with awe and reverence of God. So should we in this case, especially as it is committed to our care. It is the fire of the altar, the Spirit of Christ, the purchase of his sufferings and death: and therefore when we feel his motions and operations, we should be careful of them as of the purchase of blood.

2. Because we can do nothing without it. *Without me, says Jesus, ye can do nothing.* So far as the Spirit goes away, all true light and heat go with him, and then the soul remains as in a state of death, in darkness, cold and stiff. When the wind ceases, how can the ship sail? And when the Spirit is quenched, how can we make to our harbour?

3. Because when once quenched we cannot rekindle it. We have no command over the Spirit, "We can neither tell whence in cometh nor whether it goeth." Were it the fire of our own hearths, though it were extinguished, we might kindle it again. But it is from heaven and we have no command there. He that will not sail while wind and tide serve, must even lie still till they come again. But a fair wind has blown to some for Immanuel's land, which having slighted, they have never again enjoyed, as in the case of Felix.

Lastly, Because the quenching of this fire, is the raising of another tending to the consuming of the soul. This is a fire of corruption within us. When the Spirit departed from Saul he went to the devil. And some people never come to a height in wickedness till the Spirit of the Lord has been at work with them, and they have quenched his motions. "When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest and findeth none. Then saith he, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first."

It is a fire of God's anger without us. "But they rebelled, and vexed his holy Spirit: therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them." For thus men turn fighters against God, enter the lists with their Creator and oppose themselves to him, who is a consuming fire.

*Use.* Quench not the Spirit. And

I. Quench not the Spirit in others, but cherish and nourish it. When you can perceive any good motions and inclinations wrought in a person, beware of doing any thing to weaken them, but help them forward. Let us,

I. Inquire how one may quench the Spirit in others?

1. By mocking them, and the way which they are looking after. This is the persecution of the tongue, which Satan raises against persons when once they begin to turn serious. In allusion to the son of the bond woman mocking Sarah and her son, the apostle says, "As then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now." With this the saints meet not only from the openly profane, but also from the formal professor. "With hypocritical mockers in feasts, they gnashed upon me with their teeth." But lay your accounts with it, and be on your guard that the Spirit be not quenched by it, Jude, ver. 17. and downwards. And for such as do it, let them remember these words, "Now therefore be ye not mockers, lest your bands be made strong; for I have

heard from the Lord God a consumption even determined upon the whole earth."

3. By speaking evil of the way of God, Acts xix. 9. It is said, "divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude." There are many who act the devil's part in this matter, who to quench the Spirit in others, bawl out their virulent speeches against sermons, communions, ministers, communicants; a very proper way to stifle any good motions in others, in the very birth. Would to God such would consider. "Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds, which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him."

3. By opposing themselves to others aiming at the way of the Lord, setting themselves to crush and bear down real religion and holiness in them. "When the Jews opposed themselves and blasphemed, Paul shook his raiment, and said unto them, your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean; from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles."

Seldom do any begin to walk with God, but Satan raises up some one or other, to be a dead weight upon them in their way. This is malignancy, and the true spirit of malignants; and such persons are real malignants, profess what they will, and God will treat them as such. But remember that Jesus hath said, "Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depths of the sea."

4. By diverting them from their duty. Thus Elymas the sorcerer withstood the apostles, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith. There is a generation, who, when the Spirit of God is calling persons one way, they are ready to call them another, and thereby to efface from their minds all impressions of religion. Evil company is one of the chief pillars of the devil's kingdom, and has been the grave of convictions to many. *Evil communications corrupt good manners.* But let such hear these words, "O full of all subtilty, and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?"

Lastly, By tempting them to sin. "Thus Balaam, taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication." Sin grieves the Spirit and provokes him to depart, and thus the soul being left dead, alienated from the life of God, the tempter is a quencher of the Spirit, and a murderer of souls. This is the case especially when

the tempter knows their weak side and attacks them there, and lays stumbling blocks before them, where they are least able to resist. What is this but to act the devil's part against the Spirit.

II. Let us inquire how we should cherish the Spirit in others.

1. By the example of a tender holy life. Example has a powerful influence, and will be fuel to the holy fire. Paul tells us *that the zeal of the Corinthians hath provoked very many*. It strengthens good impressions wrought by the Spirit on the souls of others, and confirms them against temptations to apostacy, which they may have from other quarters.

2. By encouraging them to follow on in the good way of the Lord. Thus when Barnabas "had come to Antioch and had seen the grace of God, he was glad, and exhorted them all, that with full purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. For he was a good man and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord." It is a pity that while others have a mouth to speak against God and his way, that we should not have a mouth to open for him. It would not a little contribute to the advancement of holiness, that we shewed a tender concern for Christ's little ones, and that they were countenanced and encouraged, according to the inclinations to piety appearing in them.

3. By stirring them up to their duty, especially when they are in hazard of sloth gaining upon them. This is to blow the holy fire and increase it. "I think it meet, says Peter, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up, by putting you in remembrance." Mutual admonition is the duty of all Christians, and a part of the communion of saints. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."

4. By warding off temptations from them, so far as lies in our power. We should try to hold them off altogether, but if we cannot thus prevent them, we should labour to blunt their edge and to support them against them, and do what we can to remove them. "Blessed are the peace makers: for they shall be called the children of God."

Lastly, By communicating Christian experiences to them. "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul." How often has this blown up the fire that was nearly being extinguished. "He hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God; many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord." The ceasing of this Christian conversation among professors, is one great cause of the decay of religion at this day.

“The disciples said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?”

III. I shall present some motives to excite us to this duty.

1. Your duty to your neighbour calls for this at your hand. It is a graceless tale to say with Cain, *Am I my brother's keeper?* As you are men, the moral law obliges you to it. *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.* And how do you love him, if you love not his soul? and how do you love his soul, if you do not cherish the Spirit in him? As you are Christians, our Saviour says, “A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.” The communion of saints is an article of our creed, but it is much worn out in practice. The sacrament of the Lord's Supper is not only a seal of our communion with Christ, but with one another, and so to bind us effectually to a particular concern for the welfare of one another's souls.

2. Your duty to our Lord Jesus Christ binds you to it. “For the zeal of thine house, saith David, hath eaten me up: and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me.” Have you any concern for the kingdom of Jesus Christ? Then it will not be mere speaking for the support of an opinion that will satisfy you, but active endeavours for advancing of real holiness. The Spirit of Christ is a public Spirit, that will lead us to be concerned for the welfare of others as well as our own. For it is natural for each member of the body to be concerned for the prosperity of the body.

3. As you act in this matter, so you join with God or the devil, and may expect your reward accordingly. If you quench the Spirit in others, then you are fighters against God, you are workers together with the devil, whose work it is to quench the Spirit in the hearts of sinners. Acts v. 35—39. If you cherish the Spirit you are workers together with God, and are pursuing the same design with the Spirit of Christ. And now the Lord is saying, who is on my side? Arrange yourselves then on his side, and be exhorted to save yourselves from this untoward generation.

Lastly, The salvation or damnation of your neighbour, may, for ought you know, depend upon it. If you cherish the Spirit in others you may be the instruments of the salvation of a soul. And remember “that he who converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.” If you quench the Spirit in them, you know not if ever the holy fire may be rekindled, after you have put it out, and so the blood of their souls may be required at your hand.

II. Quench not the Spirit in your own souls but nourish and cherish it. Before I proceed to prosecute this exhortation, I must speak to three cases.

I. There may be some, that after all that was going at this solemn occasion, they were looking for nothing, and they have got as little. So this sin cannot fall out in their hand, they cannot quench the Spirit, for the holy fire was never kindled in their hearts. Thus having nothing, they can lose nothing. To such I would say,

1. What would you think to see the showers of heaven fall all around on your neighbour's ground, while not one drop fell on yours, and this in time of a great drought? Would you not think yourselves the mark at which God shoots his arrows? Now what can you think of yourselves when God toucheth the hearts of others, but never toucheth yours? When he goes by you, and comes by you, speaks by his Spirit to those on your right hand and those on your left, but never one word to you? Is not this very like the case of being given up of God; "Ephraim is joined to his idols let him alone." For a tree to be without leaves, or fruit in the winter is nothing, but to be so in the spring and summer, when all about it is flourishing, says that tree is for the axe and near to the fire.

2. Do you think that such a state as this will continue? Will you always be secure and sleep in peace? Nay, you shall have an awakening sooner or later, if not in mercy it will be in wrath. "Rise up ye women that are at ease; hear my voice, ye careless daughters; give ear unto my speech. Many days and years shall ye be troubled, ye careless women." If you should sleep it out all your days, you shall awaken at length, never to close your eyes more. "And in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom." God will one time or other take the filthy garments of thy sin, wrap them up in brimstone, and set them on fire about your ears.

II. There may be others, that whether they were looking for it or not, got something, but it is gone from them already, like Nebuchadnezzar's dream. The Spirit is already quenched in them.

1. Consider that you have lost a fair wind for Immanuel's land, and that is a great loss. It is a shameful loss, it is gone so soon. And have you even so soon forgot his works? You were told your hazard. You might have taken better heed. Be ashamed and grieved on this account.

2. Take it in time and there may be hope to recover it, set about it quickly. Rise now and seek a recovery. The longer you delay, it will be the harder to recover. "I will rise now, and go about the city: in the streets, and in the broad ways I will seek him whom my soul loveth."



3. Go back and seek where you lost it. Consider what particular neglect of yours, or what particular violence done to the Spirit it was, which provoked him to depart. Seek it out, mourn over it, apply to the blood of Christ for the removal of it, and you will recover. For this blood "purgeth our conscience from dead works, to serve the living God."

Lastly, Go over your whole work again, in self examination, viewing the several steps of your way about the communion, and review your covenant with God there sealed, and cry to him by prayer for the return of his Spirit. Song iii. 2. and downwards. And hang on about his hand resolutely, till you be revived, and made to walk in the paths of righteousness.

III. There may be others, that were looking for something. But alas! says the soul, I am sadly disappointed. The Lord has hid his face. How shall I do, who have little or nothing to do with? To such I would say,

1. Your case is so far hopeful, as you are sensible of it. Bless God your case is not like Samson's, "when he awoke out of his sleep, and said, I will go out, as at other times before, and shake myself. And he wist not that the Lord was departed from him." The knowledge of the disease is the first step to the cure.

2. Consider what may have been the procuring causes. It may be there has been some remarkable defect in your preparation to meet the Lord. Perhaps you have not been at pains to prepare yourselves, neglecting self-examination, or being careless in it, not stirring up the sacramental graces. And if so, you may wonder more, that he has not made a breach on you, than that he has hid his face from you.

Look there has not been some unrepented of guilt lying on your conscience. "But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear." Some of the old leaven retained, some bosom idol nourished, some Achan in the camp. "Now if we regard iniquity in our hearts, the Lord will not hear us." If so, search it out and remove that bane of strife betwixt the Lord and you. Look that you have not sat down on your preparation. It is hard for us to be at much pains and not think too much of it. And thus one may be like the bee, that drowns itself in its own work. If so mourn over it. Finally, Look that while you have done many things, you have not neglected the main thing, that is the great duty of believing, believing in the gospel promise sealed by the sacrament. There are some poor tossed souls, who in effect are sometimes not disposed to believe, and they do not see the evil, they refuse to be comforted, or make

any believing application to themselves of Christ and his benefits. "If I had called, says Job, and he had answered me; yet would I not believe that he had hearkened unto my voice. For he breaketh me with a tempest, and multiplieth my wounds without cause." But pray what do you mean? Must God change his method of grace for you? Hear what Christ says, "said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God."

3. Perhaps you complain more of your case than need requires. As to your disappointment. There are some disappointments not to be complained of. They are useful for carrying on the Lord's work in the soul. There are deadening disappointments, that take away with them all the appetite of the soul after Christ and his benefits, and sharpen the appetite after the world and lusts. Numbers xi. 4. and downwards. So that being disappointed at Christ's door, they go the more greedily back to that of the world and their lusts. This is very dangerous. But there are also quickening disappointments, that stir up the soul to seek the Lord more earnestly. Song iii. 4. Our Lord has sundry dishes at his table. Some for filling the guests, these are sensible enjoyments. Some for appetizing them, and these are these quickening disappointments. If you have got this, quench not the Spirit, for you have that which is of more worth than you are aware, Song v. 4,—6. If our Lord hath passed by you, but withal thrown this live coal into your heart in passing, cherish it, pursue and you shall find.

Besides there are different measures of the Spirit, and divers operations of the same Spirit; and the holy fire is not alike vigorous in all where it comes. But the least filing of gold is gold, and therefore precious. And the least motions of the Spirit are to be entertained; the least spark of the holy fire is to be fed and not quenched.

*Question.*—How shall I know that the Spirit has been at work in my soul, that any of the holy fire has been kindled in my heart, that so I may know what to do? *Answer,*

I. The holy fire has light with it. Is there a new light let into thy soul from the word, that is promising. But know that there are very different degrees of that light. The blind man whose eyes our Lord opened, after the first touch, saw men as trees walking, but when Jesus put his hands upon him again, then he was restored and saw every man clearly. The King brings some into his chambers, and by the light shining about them, they see and are assured of the Lord's love to them. They can read the covenant with Christ's name and their own name at the foot of it. O quench not the Spirit, improve the golden spot of time and walk softly for the

light is easily put out. "What shall I say? said Hezekiah when his life was lengthened, he hath both spoken unto me, and himself hath done it: I shall go softly all my years in the bitterness of my soul." Others perhaps have only got some glimmerings of solid hope from the Lord. They came in a dark night of desertion. But the day began to break with them and their head was brought a little above the water, though they could not read the covenant clearly; yet like the blind man, they saw men as trees; had some faint discoveries of their interest in his favour. Quench not the Spirit. Some perhaps have only seen a glory in Christ which they saw not before. They have lived strangers to him hitherto, but now he is more beautiful in their eyes than formerly. O quench not the Spirit, but blow up the spark. Imitate the spouse, Song v. 9. to the end. Think upon the excellencies of Christ, and seek after him.

All that others have got, is perhaps but some convictions of sin. Some arrows have pierced their consciences. Or perhaps but one single arrow is sticking there. O quench not the Spirit. Has the conscience got a touch, the heart may get one next. One stone in the building of sin loosened, may make way for all falling together. "Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, men and brethren, what shall we do?"

II. The holy fire has a burning heat with it. And this also is of very different degrees. Some perhaps have had the satisfaction to see the holy fire take hold of their corruptions, as that however masterful at other times, yet that fire brought them down, and made them fall to ashes. The Lord has treated them as Joshua did his captains, when he caused them put their feet upon the necks of the captive kings. Some lusts that have long held them under they got subdued. O quench not the Spirit. Wounded lusts getting time to recover, have made sad work at a second onset. Quench not the Spirit, otherwise the brand plucked out of the burning will recover strength. All that it has done for others is, that fire has been set to the bond that bound their hearts and lusts together. They are come the length to be content, that they and their lusts were freely parted, though they know not how it will be done. O quench not the Spirit. You have your lusts now at an advantage. The throne of sin in the heart is shaken. Lusts sit not so fast as they did there. Hold hand to the tottering fence, its breaking may come at an instant.

With some there may be only an unusual, but weak warmth in the heart after Christ and religion. They have a hankering after

him. They are more squeamish as to their lusts than before ; though perhaps they cannot yet see, how if they quit them for Christ, their loss will be made up. Truly this is very little, but every thing must have a beginning. O quench not the Spirit ; the cloud like a man's hand may soon cover the heavens. The conversion of Zaccheus had as small a beginning. Luke xiii. 3. *He sought to see Jesus, who he was.* You have seen and are touched. Take a better look of the plant of renown, and you may come to be pierced, caught, captivated.

Some may find no sensible warmth in their breasts after him, but there is an uneasiness in their conscience, as by a spark falling from a candle on a person's hand. They have a sort of uneasiness with respect to their soul's case, a secret dissatisfaction with their state. This is very little, but it may be the beginning of good. Then quench not the Spirit, for if the dry bones be but beginning to move, they may come together. Thus it appears the Spirit may be at work, though in different degrees. And though your attainments be not so great as those of others, be thankful for what you have attained, and cherish it.

Perhaps it has not been so dark a night with you, as with them that have got a clearer day. If you be not lifted up so high as others, it is like you have not been plunged so low as they were. In the dispensation of grace usually the saddest dejection goes before the greatest elevation. "For every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low : and the crooked shall be made straight and the rough places plain. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ."

Again, It is like you have not such hard work before you, as they have. God's children are not suffered to eat idle bread. There is commonly hard work appointed for them that get a large meal. "Thus the angel of the Lord came again the second time to Elijah, and touched him and said, arise and eat because the journey is too great for thee. And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights, unto Horeb the mount of God." The clearest manifestations of God to a soul, ordinarily usher in the hardest services. If you compare the life of Isaac with the life of Jacob, the latter had the greatest enjoyments, but so had he the hardest trials. Once more sovereignty challenges a latitude. *Is it not lawful for me, says God, to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good?* It takes one piece of clay and sets it upon a throne, another piece of the same clay and sets it upon a dunghill, Job xxi. 22,—25. Every disciple

is not the beloved disciple. One is dandled upon the knee, another is led to heaven by the brink of hell.

And however small your attainment be, yet consider, the less it be it will die out the sooner, so there is the more need to be at pains to keep it alive. They that have but one coal had need to cover it well, that it go not out. No person need teach those that have but one penny in their purse to steward it well. O that we were as wise in spiritual things as in temporal.

Consider also, that however little it be Satan will think it worth his pains to rob you of it. "When any one heareth the word of the kingdom and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart." And is it not then worth pains to keep it. But, alas! we are not so watchful by far for our salvation, as Satan is for our destruction.

Again, Be it as small as it will, it is your all. The poor man thinks he has as good reason to be careful of his little stock, as another has to be careful of his great one. And if that little be gone what have you more. But if you labour not to preserve the little, you would let more go if you had it. "He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much." And therefore it is just with God to give you no more of that kind to abuse. So then God has you on your trials for more, while he puts some little thing into your hand. Take heed how you use it. For the least beginning of good to your souls is of more worth than the whole world. It may be the seed of everlasting life to you, and so virtually comprehend your everlasting happiness, which it will be dreadful to throw away. And the less a precious thing be, it is the more carefully preserved.

Finally, Consider that the kingdom of God in a soul often has a very small beginning. Hence it is compared "To a grain of mustard seed, which indeed is the least of all seeds."

And now having considered these cases, I resume my exhortation. Quench not the Spirit in yourselves, but nourish and cherish it.

I. I shall shew how the Spirit may be quenched by you in your own souls. There are many ways to do this, you should beware of them all.

1. By unwatchfulness. Hence the exhortation, "Be watchful and strengthen the things that remain, that are ready to die." The holy fire will go out if it be not watched. A careless disposition of mind will soon make an empty soul. "By much slothfulness the building decayeth, and through idleness of the hands the house droppeth through." If we consider that our hearts are like wet timber, that it is unfit for keeping fire, and that there are so many

temptations like rain falling from the clouds, we will soon see, that there is no keeping the fire in, if we give over our watching.

2. By neglect of duties. The heart of man touched by the finger of God is like a watch, that if it be not duly rolled up will not go. Thomas being absent from one occasion of communion with Christ, his heart was overspread with the power of unbelief. If a man neglect the means of grace, how can he think his soul will prosper. The neglecting of prayer once, or of any other duty may quench the Spirit. And one such neglect may be a wide door for good impressions to go out at.

3. By not complying with holy motions raised in the heart. David was aware of this. Hence says he, "When thou saidst, seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek." It is a dangerous business to sit still, when the Lord, by a secret working on the soul, may be calling one to rise. To shift a duty while the Spirit of the Lord is inwardly prompting a man to it. Sometimes persons have smarted sadly this way. They would not go when wind and tide were inviting, and afterwards when they would the wind would not serve. The Spirit of the Lord, like a man held too long at the door, being grieved departs, and is gone when the door comes to be opened. "I opened, says the spouse to my beloved; but my beloved had withdrawn himself and was gone."

But to prevent delusion in this case, Consider that the Spirit of the Lord sets men always on work in season. Accordingly the good man bringeth forth his fruit in his season. And hence though a motion in itself be good, yet if it be unseasonable, that is an evidence, that it is either from our own spirits, or a worse. "For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace as in all the churches." Again the duty will be a duty of our station. "But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk: and so I ordain in all churches." Thus some think Uzah's error in putting forth his hand and taking hold of the ark, 2 Sam. vi. 6. was that he was no Levite. So though it seemed a pious motion, yet not being a duty of his station, it was unacceptable and offensive in the sight of God.

In like manner, violent motions are to be suspected. For these that come from the Spirit of the Lord, if they bring not a convincing evidence along with them, as light discovers itself, to carry the person at first beyond hesitation; they will admit deliberation, and always trial by the word. "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they be of God." Whereas delusions shun the light, as unable to abide a trial. "To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to these, it is because there is no light in them."

4. Sins against light, do in a special manner quench the Spirit. "Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins, let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression." By these the holy fire is quenched, as by vessels of water thrown upon a fire to put it out. They waste the conscience, erase good impressions from the heart, defile the soul, and provoke the Spirit to depart. Beware of them, for they will quench the Spirit and are highly provoking in the sight of God. For sins of ignorance and weakness make men go halting, but such presumptuous sins do as it were break the legs of the travellers to Zion.

5. Fleshly lusts have a special malignant influence this way. "Dearly beloved, I beseech you, as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul." They are the impure waters, in which good impressions are drowned. To be drunk with wine, and filled with the Spirit are inconsistent and incompatible. "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit." What we have, Prov. xxiii. 21. holds true in spiritual as well as in temporal things. "For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty; and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags." Filthiness and uncleanness wear out good motions in a very effectual manner. If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy. They who give themselves up to voluptuousness and sensuality in heart and life, will soon find the Spirit will be quenched by these means. For they who drench themselves in the pleasures of the flesh, will find it hard to get out of the mire to soar aloft.

6. Inordinate care of and love to the world. "And that which fell among the thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choaked with cares, and riches, and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection." When the heart is set upon the stretch for gaining and keeping of the things of the world, good motions do vanish, because the hold of them cannot be kept, while such an eager hold is taken of other things, no more than one can grasp at heaven and earth at once. These are like wasps and flies that disturb the soul, that it cannot rest in God. And how can a man ever think to prosper, while he comes not away with Christ from the deceitful and dangerous world.

7. Backsliding and returning again to former sins. "The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways." Therefore take that exhortation. "As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to your former lusts in your ignorance." If men will go back to the same courses, which have before injured their souls,

and will play with the serpent that has so often bit them ; what can they expect but that the Spirit will be quenched.

Lastly, The entertaining of any one lust or idol, of jealousy will do it. "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." While Samson lay in Delila's lap, he lost his locks and the Lord departed from him. The fly goes about the candle till its wings are burned. And the entertaining of some unmortified idol oftentimes rears up a wall of separation betwixt God and a soul. Let us now,

II. Know how we may nourish and cherish this holy fire.

1. Be diligent in duties. *The soul of the diligent shall be made fat.* Let no opportunity of communion with God slip. He that would advance his spiritual stock, must trade in the market of free grace.

It is observable that persons readily drink in much of the spirit of those whom they love most, and with whom they most converse. And they that converse much with God, will get much of his Spirit. I would recommend to you particularly, the duty of Christian conference. See how much the disciples' going to Emmaus gained by this exercise, Luke xxiv. 17.—32. It is a notable mean to cherish good motions both in ourselves and others. It is the way to increase what we have, as well as to retain it. As air will make the coal blaze that was lying hid under the ashes, so the very speaking of God and religion, is apt to inflame the heart, that otherwise is very dead. And surely the decay of this exercise is one cause of the decay of religion in our day.

I also recommend the duty of secret prayer. A Christian much alone with God in prayer, will readily be found a thriving Christian. *Pray without ceasing.* It is a duty in which Christians most commonly have communion, and a duty to which they have access, when they cannot have it to many others. If you neglect this, truly your soul's case will soon go to wreck. Here also let me recommend a conscientious attendance upon public ordinances. "Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation." Faith comes by hearing and so do other graces, for they follow upon it. And this makes many gracious souls that they cannot live without them. They find their need of them every day, still standing in need to be instructed, warned, directed, comforted, and stirred up to their duty. So that they are as necessary as showers to the parched ground.

And if you find yourselves in hazard of standing still or going backward, set about the duty of solemn personal fasting and humiliation.

2. Watch your hearts and labour to keep up a tender frame of spirit. "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life." As the heart is, so will the life be. It is the room



where the Spirit lodgeth, and if untenderness get in there, the Spirit will be grieved and depart. Labour to keep up a horror of sin, a hatred of every false way, a sense of your sinfulness, and your need of Christ's blood and Spirit. For when these are lost, the prosperity of the soul is gone, for that soul grows not, that is not growing downward in self-denial, self-abhorrence, and humility.

3. Be universally tender in your walk. "Then shall I not be ashamed when I have respect unto all thy commandments." The Spirit must needs be quenched, when the conversation is like the legs of the lame that are not equal. If men pretend to the duties of the first table, and make no conscience of the duties of the second; or the reverse. One leak in a ship will sink it, and one sin indulged will ruin the soul's case. Therefore, walk with God as if men's eyes were on you, and with men as having God's eyes on you. Let religion have an universal influence on your walk, your thoughts, words, and actions; exciting you to your personal and relative duties. And herein exercise yourselves to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward man.

4. Make religion your business, your main work and design in the world. Good reason it be so. "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" To take religion by fits and starts will bring it to a poor account in the end. And religious chance customers will never enrich themselves with it. The salvation and generation work laid upon us, is too weighty and important, for us ever to think that it will do by the by. It is the one thing needful, therefore should be the main thing aimed at by us.

5. Let religion be woven into the whole of your conversation in the world. "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. Salt is good: but if the salt have lost its saltness, wherewith will ye season it. Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another." Whatever be your meat, salt is necessary to season it, and whatever we be doing, grace is necessary to qualify it, for without it nothing is pure to us, in or about us. "Unto the pure all things are pure, but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure, but even their mind and conscience are defiled." You should take religion with you not only to your prayers, but to your work, to the field, to your bed and table. "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." Viewing God in all these things, acting from a sense of his command, and as under his eye, managing in them all as may be most for the honour of God, your own and others' spiritual welfare.

6. Beware of doing any thing with a doubting conscience, doubt-

ing whether it be lawful or not. "And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith, for whatsoever is not of faith is sin." But here there is need to distinguish between a doubting and a scrupulous conscience. A doubting conscience hangs in suspense, betwixt the two parts of the question, and assents to neither of them. A scrupulous conscience assents to one part of it, but there is a certain uneasiness inclining it to the other side. In this case one should endeavour to get their scruples removed by examination of them, but if after all they remain, one may safely act against them, because they are but the weakness of conscience, without foundation, and the clearest light lies to the other side. For example, one conscious of his sincere desire to be the Lord's, to give up with all sin and obey Christ's command, *do this in remembrance of me*, such an one may approach the Lord's table, notwithstanding that a sense of his unworthiness makes him scruple, whether to go forward or not. "For a bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench." And if it were not so, people might scruple themselves out of all religion. For it is certain, for example, that though prayer be the necessary duty of all, yet some have been tossed with scruples as to their praying, whether they should give over prayer or not. But in such a case, the scruple should be violently thrown away, if no better can be.

But in the case of the doubting conscience it is another matter, for in it for want of light the conscience has no ground to go upon. For example, money, or goods are placed before a man, he knows not whether they be his or not; if one take them to himself in this case he sins though it be his own, for the conscience, meanwhile, has no light in that matter. So for ought he knows it may be theft, in which case to let alone must certainly be the safest side which is to be followed. And this gives such a throw and wrong cast to conscience, that it is a ready way to quench the Spirit.

7. Be still pressing forward in religion. Sit not down on any measure attained, but be still labouring for more. "This one thing, says Paul, I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Get what we will here, there will always be a want. Therefore hold fast what you have, that the fire go not out. You must also blow it up still that it may burn the more keenly. The Christian never stands still. If you be not going forward, you are going backward. If you be not adding a cubit to your stature, you are decreasing.

8. Trade with your talents, improving them for God, however few

they be. Matthew xxv. 22, 23. If a person have but a little fire, yet if it get air and be blown up, it may make a brisk fire. And grace grows by improvement. It is with grace and good motions, as with a spring. If it be stopped the water goes away, but if it be cleared it runs and runs on. If one had but a conviction of sin, if he should improve that in speaking of his sinfulness to God in prayer, to humble him in meditation, and to others in Christian conversation, it would grow.

9. Be careful and tender of good motions. Rough handling of a spark will make it go out, when wise management would make much out of it. Good motions are tender birds of heaven, easily checked and put back. When the wind blows, spread out your sails, and when your hearts begin to be warmed with love to Christ and holiness, and hatred of sin, the iron then is hot, therefore strike and seize the golden opportunity of making forward in your journey to Immanuel's land.

Lastly, Entertain lively hopes of increasing your stock. "But let us who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation." When the heart grows hopeless, the hands will hang down and the knees be feeble. "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. But hope of gaining makes people diligent. What though many attempts misgive. The tree falls not down at the first or second stroke of the axe. And water consumes stones by degrees. Let us,

III. Enforce this duty by some motives. Quench not the Spirit in yourselves, but cherish it.

*Motive 1.* Consider that the workings of the Spirit upon your souls are precious, and should be much prized. "Wherefore is there a price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom, seeing he hath no heart to it." These operations of the Spirit are worthy of our utmost care and diligence. They are the seeds of eternal life in a soul, which duly cherished may end in your everlasting salvation; and which, when crushed, may be fatal to your eternal misery. The living word dropped into the heart is heaven in the bud. "It is the incorruptible seed, by which we are born again." And this, when quenched, is hell in the bud.

These operations of the Spirit are high-born strangers, and should be honourably entertained. They are the sparks of the sacred fire from heaven, the product of the Spirit of Christ in the hearts of sinners. A fire this which could not be blown up by men, and therefore valuable in respect of its heavenly origin.

They are also great pledges of God's good will to sinners. By

nature we are at a distance from God. But by these, the Lord begins to draw us to himself. He enters into converse with our souls, after a long night of silence, a proof of his good will, to have the distance removed. Finally, these operations are denied to many. *Ephraim is joined to his idols, let him alone.* How many are there whom God suffers to go on in their evil way, and the Spirit of the Lord does not touch their hearts? How many who have sometimes had them, but now they are gone? And they can no more command them, than they can blow up a fire after it hath been extinguished, or light a candle that is burned to ashes.

*Motive. 2.* Consider the danger of quenching the Spirit. Take heed to yourselves, while the Spirit of the Lord is at work with our souls. You walk on slippery places, where you may easily or suddenly fall, and who knows how fatal it may be. The Spirit in you, is a fire that may be soon and easily quenched.

*I opened to my beloved,* says the spouse, *but my beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone.* A fine and tender flower may easily be crushed and caused to wither. "Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines; for our vines have tender grapes." God is a jealous God, and his Spirit is easily grieved and provoked to depart.

When this Spirit is quenched, you cannot rekindle it. Had the fire in the altar been common fire, there needed not have been so much watching to keep it burning. If it had gone out, they could have kindled it from their own hearths. But it was fire from heaven, and if once it went out, they could not kindle it again. They could not ascend to the throne and bring it down from heaven.

When the fire of the Spirit is put out, the soul's case must needs go to wreck. *Yea,* says God, *we also to them, when I depart from them.* When the soul is gone, the body is left a lifeless lump, and corrupts in a grave, becoming a feast to the worms. And when the Spirit of the Lord leaves a soul, it dies, and living lusts set up their heads, and swarm there without controul. Hence often gross out-breakings as in the cases of David and Peter. Fearful apostacies and defections from God, as in Saul, follow the quenching of the Spirit: so that it is like the breaking out of waters, when the dyke is broken down that dammed them up, Matth. xii. 43.—45.

*Motive. 3.* If you cherish and improve the little you have, it is the way to get more. This will appear if you consider, that it is the Lord's ordinary way in his works, to bring great things from small beginnings. Though he could have made the world in a moment, yet he took six days, he made first a rude mass, which, day by day, he brought to perfection. See 1 Kings xviii. 43. to the end. See also how great work begins, Esther vi. 1.

Consider also that the work of grace in the soul, commonly arises from a very small beginning. It is like a grain of mustard seed. It is a seed that springs so leisurely, that the springing thereof can hardly be discerned. The beginning may be very low, which the Lord will cherish and bring to perfection. "For a bruised reed he shall not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench." Besides, consider that no person gets a refusal from heaven, but those that court it by their own indifference. And indeed a careless faint way of asking from the Lord, is in effect to court a denial. He is more ready to give than we are to seek. *Open thy mouth*, says he, *wide, and I will fill it*. He loves importunity, and will not deny such a suit. And though some such suiters have stood long at his door, never one fell down dead at it. God has given his word of promise for it. "For unto every one that hath, shall be given, and he shall have abundance." A man hath no more in God's account, than what he improves. Now God doth not set down all his children with equal stocks, some have more, some less. But all have a promise of more, on their improving of what they have. And a little thing with a promise, will be like the five loaves that increased in the distribution.

*Motive 4.* If you quench the Spirit, you will be great losers. You will lose what you have attained. "Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward." The good motions will go, and then the tenderness of the heart, love to Christ goes away; and you are set a step further back in your way to heaven. And who knows if you lose that if ever the wind blow so fair again for you. And if it should, you will have to begin, and it is a sad matter always to be beginning, ever learning, and never coming to the knowledge of the truth.

You will also lose all your pains which you have taken to get it. "The slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting: but the substance of a diligent man is precious." How sad is it to be at pains for something, and then when it is got to let it slip through our fingers. We have enough to do, though we do not undo what we have been doing.

Finally, You may lose your souls by quenching the Spirit. "And Jesus said unto him, No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back is fit for the kingdom of heaven. Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him." And it will heat the furnace of hell one seven times more, to think that once you were not far from the kingdom of God. Amen.