

SERMON XXXIV.

The blinding Policies of Satan opened, as the cause of Unbelief, and Forerunner of Destruction.

2 COR. iv. 3, 4.

But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

THE aversions of men from Jesus Christ, their only remedy, is as much to be admired as lamented; one would think the news of deliverance should make the hearts of captives leap for joy, the tidings of a Saviour should transport the heart of a lost sinner. A man would think a little rhetoric might persuade the naked soul of a sinner to put on the rich robes of Christ's righteousness, which will cost him nothing but acceptance; or the perishing, starving sinner to accept the bread of God which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. This is the great design I have managed in this whole discourse; the centre to which all these lines are drawn; many arguments have been used, and many ways attempted to prevail with men to apply and put on Christ, and I am afraid, all too little. I have but laboured in vain, and spent my strength for nought; all these discourses are but the beating of the air, and few, if any, will be persuaded to come unto Christ, who is clearly opened, and freely offered in the gospel to them. For alas! while I am reasoning, Satan is blinding their minds with false reasonings and contrary persuasions; the god of this world turns away the ears, and draws away the hearts of almost the whole world from Christ; "The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." Satan is a great and jealous prince, and is well aware, that so many of his subjects as shall be brought to see the misery of their condition, will never endure to abide any longer in subjection to him: it is therefore his great policy to put out their eyes, that he may secure their souls; to darken their understandings, that he may keep his interest firm and entire in their wills and affections; and this makes the effectual application of Christ so great a difficulty, that, on the contrary, it is just matter of admiration that any soul is persuaded and prevailed with to quit the service of Satan, and come to Christ. And therefore, in

the last place, to discover the great difficulty of conversion, and shew you where it is that all our endeavours are obstructed, so that we can move the design no further, with all our labouring and striving, reasoning and persuading; as also to mourn over and bewail the misery of christless and unregenerate souls, with whom we must part, upon the saddest terms; I have chosen this scripture, which is of a most awakening nature, if haply the Lord, at last, may persuade any soul to come over to Christ thereby.

These words come into the apostle's discourse, by way of *prolepsis*; he had been speaking in the former chapter, of the transcendent excellency of the gospel above the law, and, among other respects, he prefers it to the law in point of clearness. The law was an obscure and cloudy dispensation; there was a vail upon the face of Moses, and the hearts of the people, that they could not see to the end of that which is abolished; but under the gospel we all, with open face, behold, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord. Against this discourse, the apostle foresaw, and obviated this objection; If your gospel be so clear, what is the reason that many, who live under the ministration of it, (and they none of the meanest, neither for wisdom nor understanding) do yet see no glory, nor excellency in it? To this he returns in the words I have read, "If our gospel be hid, it is hid from them that are lost, whose eyes the god of this world hath blinded," &c. q. d. It is true, multitudes there are, who see no glory in Christ or the gospel, but the fault is not in either; but in the minds of them that believe not. The sun shines forth in its glory, but the blind see no glory in it; the fault is not in the sun, but in the eye. In the words themselves we have three parts to consider:

1. A dreadful, spiritual judgment inflicted.
2. The wicked instrument by whom it is inflicted.
3. The politic manner in which he doth it.

First, We have here a very dreadful, spiritual judgment inflicted upon the souls of men, viz. the hiding of the gospel from them: if our gospel be hid; for these words, *Εἰ ὁ θεὸς καὶ ἐστὶ*, are a concession, that so it is; a very sad, but undeniable truth. Many are there who see no beauty in Christ, nor necessity of him; though both are so plainly and evidently revealed in our gospel, "if our gospel be hid." It is called our gospel, not as if St. Paul and other preachers of it, were the authors and inventors of it; but our gospel, because we are the preachers and dispensers of it. We are put in trust with the gospel, and though we preach it, in the demonstration of the Spirit, and of power, using all plainness of speech to make men understand it, yet it is hid from many under our ministry: it is hid from their understandings, they see no glory in it; and hid from their hearts, they see no power in it. Our

gospel, notwithstanding all our endeavours, is a hidden gospel unto some; this is the sorest, and most dreadful judgment.

Secondly, We have here an account of that wicked instrument by whom this judgment is inflicted, viz. Satan, called here (by a *mimesis*) *the god of this world*; not simply and properly, but because he challenges to himself the honour of a god, rules over a vast empire, and hath multitudes of souls, even the greater part of the world, in subjection and blind obedience to his government.

Thirdly, Here, also, we have an account of the politic manner of this government, how he maintains his dominion among men, and keeps the world in quiet subjection to him; namely, by blinding the minds of all them that believe not; putting out the eyes of all his subjects, darkening that noble faculty, the mind, or understanding; the thinking, considering, and reasoning power of the soul, which the philosophers truly call *το ηγεμονικον*, the leading and directing faculty; for it is to the soul, what eyes are to the body, and it is therefore called, “the eyes of the understanding,” Eph. i. 18. These eyes Satan blinds, i. e. he darkens the mind and understanding with ignorance and error; so that when men come to see and consider spiritual things, “they see indeed, but perceive not,” Isa. vi. 9, 10. They have some general, confused notions, but no distinct, powerful, and effectual apprehensions of those things: and this is the way, indeed, none like it, to bar men effectually from Jesus Christ, and hinder the *application of the benefits of redemption* to their souls. It is true, the righteous God permits all this to be done by Satan, upon the souls of men; but wheresoever he finally prevails thus to blind them, it is as the text speaks, *εν τοις απογυμνωτοις*, *in them that are lost*, or appointed of God unto perdition. The elect of God are all blinded for a time, but Christ applieth unto them his eye-salve, effectually opens the eyes of their understandings, and recovers them thereby, out of Satan’s power and dominion; but as for those who still continue thus blinded, the symptoms and characters of eternal death appear upon their souls; they are a company of lost men.

Doct. *That the understandings of all unbelievers are blinded by Satan’s policies, in order to their everlasting perdition.*

Four things must be opened in the doctrinal part of this point.

First, What the blinding of the understanding, or hiding of the gospel from the understanding, is.

Secondly, I shall demonstrate, that the understandings of many are thus blinded, and the gospel hidden from them.

Thirdly, I shall shew what policies Satan uses to blind the minds of men.

Fourthly, That this blindness is the sorest judgment, and in order to men's everlasting perdition.

Fifthly, And then apply the whole.

First, We shall enquire what the blinding of the mind, or hiding the gospel from it, is. Two sorts of men are thus blinded in the world.

1. Those that want the means of illumination.

2. Those that have the means, but are denied the blessing and efficacy of them.

The former is the case of the Pagan world, who are in midnight darkness for want of the gospel. The latter is the case of the Christian world. The greatest part of them that live within the sound of the gospel, being blinded by the god of this world, Isa. vii. 9, 10. "And he said, Go, and tell this people; hear ye indeed, but understand not; and, see ye indeed, but perceive not: Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy; and shut their eyes, lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed." Thus, when the Sun of righteousness actually arose on the world, it is said, John i. 5. "The light shined in darkness, but the darkness comprehended it not." So we may say of all that light which is in the understanding of all unbelievers, what Job speaks of the grave, Job x. 22. "That the light there is as darkness." But more particularly, to open the nature of this spiritual blindness, I will shew you,

1. What it is not opposed unto.

2. What it is opposed unto.

1. Let us examine what spiritual blindness, or the hiding the gospel from the minds of men is not opposed unto: and we shall find,

First, That it is not opposed unto natural wisdom; a man may be of an acute and clear understanding; eagle-eyed, to discern the mysteries of nature, and yet the gospel may be hidden from him. Who were more sagacious and quick-sighted in natural things than the Heathen Philosophers, renowned for wisdom in their generations; yet unto them the gospel was but *foolishness*, 1 Cor. i. 20, 21. St. Augustin confesseth, that before his conversion he was filled with offence and contempt of the simplicity of the gospel. *Dedignabur esse parvulus*, saith he, I scorned to become a child again. And that great Bradwardine, the profound doctor, who was learned, *usque ad stuporem*, even to a wonder, professed, that when he first read Paul's epistles, he despised them, because he found not in them, *metaphysicum ingenium*, those metaphysical notions which he expected. Upon this account it was, that Christ brake forth into the pathetic gratulation of his Father's

love to the elect, Mat. xi. 25. "At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth; because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes."

Secondly, It is not opposed to all light and knowledge in spiritual truths. A man may have a true understanding of the scriptures, give an orthodox exposition of them, and enlighten the minds of others by them; and yet the gospel may be hidden from himself, Mat. vii. 22. "Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name!" So Rom. ii. 19. "And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light to them that sit in darkness," &c. A man may shew others the way to Christ and salvation, whilst both are hid from himself.

Thirdly, It is not opposed to all kind of influences upon the affections; for, it is possible, the gospel may touch the affections themselves, and cause some sweet motions and raptures in them; and yet be an hidden gospel to the soul, Heb. vi. 5, 9.

But if these three things may consist with spiritual blindness unto what then is it opposed? To which I answer, that spiritual blindness stands only opposed to that saving manifestation of Jesus Christ in the gospel by the Spirit, whereby the soul is regenerated, and effectually changed by a real conversion unto God: Wherever the gospel thus comes in the demonstration of the Spirit, and of power, producing such an effect as this in the soul, it is no longer an hidden gospel to that soul, though such persons do not see clearly all that glory which is revealed by the gospel; though they know but in part, and see darkly as through a glass; yet the eyes of their understandings are opened, and the things which belong to their peace are not hidden from them.

Secondly, But though this be the happiness of some men, yet it is demonstrable that the eyes of many are blinded by the god of this world, and the gospel is an hidden gospel from them; for,

First, Many that live under the gospel are so entirely swallowed up in the affairs of this world, that they allow themselves no time to ponder the great concernment of their souls in the world to come; and judge you, whatever the gifts and knowledge of these men are, whether the god of this world hath not blinded their eyes. If it were not so, it were impossible that ever they should thus waste the most precious opportunities of salvation upon which their everlasting well-being depends, and spend time at the door of eternity about trifles which so little concern them. Yet this is the case of the greatest number that go under the Christian name. The earth hath opened her mouth and swallowed up their time, thoughts, studies, and strength, as it did the bodies of Corah and his accom-

plices. The first, the freest, yea, the whole of their time, is devoted to the service of the world; for even at that very time when they present their bodies before the Lord, in the duties of his worship, their hearts are wandering after vanities, and “going after their covetousness,” Ezek. xliii. 31. Judge whether the god of this world hath blinded these men or no, who can see so much beauty in the world, but none in Christ, and put an absolute necessity upon the vanities of this world, but none upon their own salvation. If this be not spiritual blindness, what is?

Secondly, The great stillness and quietness of men’s consciences, under the most rousing and awakening truths of the gospel, plainly prove that the god of this world hath blinded their eyes. For did men see and apprehend the dangerous condition they are in as the word represents it; nothing in the world would quiet them but Christ. As soon as men’s eyes come to be opened, the next enquiry they come to make is, “What shall we do to be saved?” It is not impossible that a man should hang over hell, see Christ and the hopes of salvation going, and the day of patience ending, and yet be quiet. O! it cannot be, that conscience should let them be quiet in such a case, if it were not blinded and stupified; but whilst the god of this world, “that strong man armed keepeth the house, all his goods are in peace,” Luke xi. 21. If once your eyes were opened by conviction, a man may then say, be quiet if you can; sit still, and let the hopes and seasons of salvation pass quietly away if you can. Suppose one should come into the congregation, and whisper but such a word as this in your ears, your child is fallen into the fire, and is a dying, since you came from home; will it be in the power of all friends you have to quiet you, and make you sit still after such an information? much less when a man apprehends his own soul in immediate danger of everlasting burnings.

Thirdly, The strong confidences and presumptuous hopes men have of salvation, whilst they remain in the state of nature and unregeneracy, plainly shew their minds to be blinded by the policy of Satan. This presumption is one of those *παραλογισμοί*, false reasonings, by which Satan deludes the understanding, as the apostle calls them, James i. 22. It is the cunning sophistry of the devil, fathered by self-love, Prov. xxi. 2. “Every way of a man is right in their own eyes,” and partly by self-ignorance, Rev. iii. 17. “Thou saidst I am rich, and have need of nothing, and knowest not that thou art poor.” You have no fears, no doubts, no case to propound that concerns your future state; and why so? but because you have no sight; your consciences are quieted, because your eyes are blinded.

Fourthly, The trifling of men with the duties of religion plainly

discovers the blinding power of Satan upon their minds and understandings, else they would never play and dally with the serious and solemn ordinances of God at that rate they do; if their eyes were once opened, they would be in earnest in prayer, and apply themselves with the closest attention of mind to hearing the gospel. There are two sorts of thoughts about any subject of meditation. Some think at a distance, and others think close to the subject. Never do thoughts of men come so close to Christ, to heaven, and to hell, as they do immediately upon their illumination. When John's ministry enlightened the people's minds, it is said, Matth. xi. 12. "From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." Surely these men were more in good earnest who would receive no repulse, take no denial, but even force themselves through all difficulties into heaven; and so would it be with you. If the god of this world had not blinded your minds you would never pray with so much unconcernedness, nor hear with so much negligence and carelessness; pray as if you prayed not, and hear as if you heard not. It is with many of your hearts as it was with Aristotle, who after a quaint oration made before him, was asked how he liked it; truly, said he, I did not hear it; for I was thinking all the while of another matter.

Fifthly, This also is a plain evidence that the god of this world hath blinded many men's eyes among us, for that they fear not to commit great sins to avoid small hazards and troubles, which all the world could never persuade them to do, if they were not hoodwinked by the god of this world. Those that have seen sin as sin, in the glass of God's law, "will chuse as Moses did, to suffer any affliction with the people of God, rather than enjoy the pleasures of sin, which are but for a season," Heb. xi. 25. Those that have seen and felt the evil of sin in the deep troubles of their spirits for it, will account all reproaches, all losses, all sufferings from men, to be but as nothing to the burthen of sin.

Sixthly, The pride and self-conceitedness of many thousands who profess Christianity, plainly shew their minds to be blinded by the *sophistry of Satan*, and that they do not understand themselves, and the woful state of their own souls. Those that see God in the clearest light, abhor themselves in the deepest humility, Isa. vi. 5. John xliii. 5. If ever the Lord had effectually opened your eyes by a clear discovery of your state by nature, and the course of your life, under the efficacy and influence of continual temptations and corruptions, how would your plumes fall? None in the world would rate you lower than you yourselves would. By all which it appears that multitudes are blinded by the god of this world.

Thirdly, In the third place we are to consider what policies Satan useth to blind the minds of them that believe not, and we shall find there are three sorts of policies practised by the god of this world upon the minds and understandings of men, which he darkens, by

1. Hindering the reception of gospel-light.
2. Obstructing the efficacy of it when received.
3. Making misapplication of it to other purposes.

First, It is a great policy in Satan, to blind the understandings of men, by hindering and preventing the reception of gospel-light, which he doth especially these five ways;

First, By tempting the dispensers of the gospel to darken the truths thereof, in the delivering of them, to shoot over the heads of their hearers, in lofty language and terms of art, so that common understandings can give no account, when the sermon is done, what the preacher would have; but, however, commend him for a good scholar, and an excellent orator. I make no doubt but the devil is very busy with ministers in their studies, tempting them, by the pride of their own hearts, to gratify his designs herein; he teaches them how to paint the glass, that he might keep out the light.

I acknowledge, a proper, grave, and comely stile, befits the lips of *Christ's ambassadors*; they should not be rude and careless in their language, or method. But this affectation of great swelling words of vanity, is but too like the proud Gnostics, whom the apostle is supposed to tax for this evil, Jude ver. 16. "This is to "darken counsel by words without knowledge," Job xxxi. 2. To amuse and bemist poor ignorant souls, and nullify the design of preaching: for every thing is accounted so far good, as it is good to the end it is ordained for. A sword that hath an hilt of gold, set thick with diamonds, is no good sword, if it hath no edge to cut, or want a good back to follow home the stroke. O that the ministers of Christ would chuse rather * sound, than great words, such as are apt to pierce the heart, rather than such as tickle the fancy; and let people beware of furthering the design of Satan against their own souls, in putting a temptation upon their ministers, by despising plain preaching. The more popular, plain, and intelligible our discourses are, so much the more probable they are to be successful; that is the most excellent oratory, that persuades men to Christ.

Secondly, Satan hinders the access of light to the understandings of men, by employing their minds about impertinent things, while

* They who speak in a popular, plain, and simple manner, are the best instructors of the people. *Bucholtz.*

they are attending upon the ordinances of God ; thus he tempted them, in Ezek. xxxiii. 31, 32. “ And they come unto thee as the “ people cometh, and they sit before thee, as my people ; and “ they hear thy words, but they will not do them ; for with their “ mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their “ covetousness. And lo ! thou art unto them as a very lovely song “ of one that hath a pleasant voice.” The modulation of the prophet’s voice was very pleasing to their ears, but mean while their fancies and thoughts were wandering after their lusts ; their hearts were full of earthly projects.

Thirdly, Satan hinders the access of light to the understandings of men, by raising objections, and picking quarrels with the word, on purpose to shake its authority, and hinder the assent of the understanding to it, and so the word makes no more impression than a fable, or a romance would do. And never did this design of Satan obtain more than in this atheistical age, wherein the main pillars and foundation of religion are shaken in the minds of multitudes. The devil hath persuaded many, that the gospel is but a cunningly-devised fable ; *fabula Christi*, as that blaspheming pope called it ; that ministers must say something to get a living. That heaven and hell are but fancies, or at most things of great uncertainty, and doubtful credit. This being once obtained, the door of the soul is shut against truth. And this design of Satan hath prospered the more in this generation, by the corrupt doctrines of seducing spirits, “ Which have overthrown the faith of some,” 2 Tim. ii. 18. And partly from the scandalous lives of loose and vain professors, the gospel hath been brought into contempt ; but especially by Satan’s artificial improvement of the corrupt natures of men in an age wherein conscience hath been so much debauched, and Atheism thereby spread as a gangrene in the body politic.

Fourthly, Satan hinders the access of light, by helping erroneous minds to draw false conclusions and perverse inferences from the great and precious truths of the gospel ; and thereby bringing them under prejudice and contempt : Thus he assists the errors of men’s minds about the doctrine of *election* : when he either persuades them, that it is an unreasonable doctrine, and not worthy of credit, that God should chuse some, and refuse others every way as good as those he hath chosen ; or, if there be any certainty in that doctrine, then men may throw the reins upon the neck of their lusts, and live at what rate they list ; for if God hath chosen them to salvation, their wickedness shall not hinder it ; and if he have appointed them unto wrath, their diligence and self-denial cannot prevent it.

Thus the doctrine of free grace is by the like sophistry of Satan

turned into lasciviousness. If grace abound, men may sin the more freely; and the shortness of our time upon earth, which in its own nature awakens all men to diligence, is, by the subtilty of Satan, turned to a quite contrary purpose, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die."

Fifthly, Satan darkens the minds of men, and shuts them up against the light, by blowing them up with pride and self-conceit-edness, persuading them that they know all these things already, and causing them to contemn the most weighty and precious truths of God, as trite and vulgar notions. The word cannot be received without meekness and humility of mind, James i. 21. Psal. xxv. 8, 9. and pride is the nurse of ignorance, 1 Tim. vi. 4. 1 Cor. viii. 7. The devil is aware of this, and therefore blows up the pride and conceitedness of men's hearts all that he can: And this temptation of his generally prevails wherever it meets with a knowing head, matched with a graceless and unsanctified heart. And thus we see by what wiles and policies Satan keeps out the light, and prevents the access of it to the minds of men.

But if he miss his design here, and truth gets into the mind, Then

Secondly, He labours to obstruct the efficacy and operation of the light; and though it do shine into the understanding, yet it shall be imprisoned there, and send down no converting influences upon the will and affections: And this design he promotes and manages divers ways.

First, By hastening to quench convictions betimes, and nip them in the bud. Satan knows how dangerous a thing it is, and destructive to his interest, to suffer convictions to continue long; and therefore it is said of him, Matth. xiii. 19. 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." Satan is compared in this scripture to the fowls in the air, which pick up the seed before it take any root in the earth. The devil is very jealous of this, and therefore labours all he can to destroy the word before it comes to operate upon the heart; which he doth sometimes by the cares of the world, and sometimes by vain companions, who prove mere quench coals unto the beginning convictions. One sinner destroyeth much good.

Secondly, No sooner doth the god of this world observe the light of truth begin to operate upon the heart, but he obstructeth that design by *procrastinations* and delays, which delude and baffle convinced souls; he persuades them if they will alter their course, it will be time enough hereafter, when such encumbrances and troubles in the world are over; if he prevail here, it is a thousand to one but the work miscarries. James i. 13, 14. If the hearer of the

word be not a doer, i. e. a present doer, while the impressions of it are fresh upon the soul, *he doth but deceive himself*. For it is with the heart, as it is with melted wax; if the seal be clapped to it presently, it will receive a fair impression; but if it be let alone, but for a little while, you can make none at all; it was therefore David's great care and wisdom to set about the work of religion under the first *impetus*, or vigorous motion of his heart and affections. Psal. cxix. 60. "I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments." Multitudes of souls have perished by these delays. It is a temptation incident to all that are under beginning convictions, especially young persons, whom the devil persuades that it were no better than madness in them to abridge and deny themselves so much delight and pleasure, and steep their youthful thoughts in such a melancholy subject as religion is.

Thirdly, If all this will not do, but convictions still continue to get ground in the conscience, then he endeavours to scare and fright them out of their convictions, by representing to them the inward terrors, troubles, and despairs into which they are about to plunge themselves, and that henceforth they must never expect a pleasant day, or comfortable hour. Thus doth the god of this world blind the minds of them that believe not, both by hindering the access of light to the mind, and the influence of it upon the heart.

Thirdly, There is yet one policy of Satan to keep souls in darkness, and that is, by the misapplication of truth; persuading them, that whatsoever they read or hear of the misery and danger of christless and unregenerate persons, doth not in the least touch or concern them, but the more notorious and profane part of the world; and by this policy he blinds the minds of all civil and moral persons. Thus the "Pharisees trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others." And so the Laodiceans thought themselves *rich, and increased with goods*; that is, in a very safe and good condition*. Now there are divers things notably improved by Satan's policy, in order to these misapplications of truth. As,

First, The freedom of their lives from the most gross pollutions of the world, Mat. xix. 20. "All these things have I kept from my youth up." A civil, sober course of life is a most effectual blind before the eyes of many a man's conscience.

Secondly, It is the policy of Satan to prevent convictions by conviction; I mean effectual convictions, by convictions that have been ineffectual, and are now vanished away. Thus the troubles that some persons have been under, must pass for their conversion,

* See my Touchstone of Sincerity upon Rev. iii. 17, 18.

though the temper of their heart be the same it was: Their ineffectual troubles are made use of by the devil to blind them in the true knowledge and apprehension of their condition. For these men and women can speak of the troubles they have had for sin, and the many tears they have shed for it; whereby thorough conviction is effectually prevented.

Thirdly, Gifts and knowledge are improved by the policy of Satan against the true knowledge of Jesus Christ, and our own estate by nature. As conviction is improved by Satan's policy against conviction, so is knowledge against knowledge. This was the case of them in Rom. ii. 17, 18. "Thou art called a Jew, and restest in the law, and makest thy boast of God, and knowest his will, and approvest the things that are excellent; being instructed out of the law, and art confident that thou thyself art a guide to the blind," &c. And this is the temptation and delusion of knowing persons, who are so far from being blind in their own account, that they account themselves the guides of the blind: Yet who blinder than such men?

Fourthly, External reformation is improved by the policy of Satan against true spiritual reformation, and passes current up and down the world for conversion; though it serve only to strengthen Satan's interest in the soul, Matth. xii. 44. and for want of a real change of heart, doth but increase their sin and misery, 2 Pet. ii. 20. This is the generation that is pure in their own eyes, and yet are not washed from their filthiness. The *cleanness* of their hands blinds them in discovering the *foulness* of their hearts.

Fifthly, The policy of Satan improves diligence in some duties, against the convictions of neglect in other duties. The external duties of religion, as hearing, praying, fasting, against the great duties of repenting and believing. This was their case, Isa. lviii. 2, 3. "Yet 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, say they, and thou seest not? Wherefore have we afflicted our souls, and thou takest no knowledge?" Thus duty is improved against duty, the externals against the internals of religion, and multitudes are blinded this way.

Sixthly, The policy of Satan improves zeal against zeal; and thereby blinds a great part of the world: he allows men to be zealous against a false religion, if thereby he may prevent them from being zealous in the true religion. He diverts their zeal against their own sins, by spending it against other men's. Thus Paul was once blinded by his own zeal for the law, Acts xxii. 3. And many men, at this day, satisfy themselves in their own zeal

against the corruptions of God's worship, and the superstitions of others, who never felt the power of true religion upon their own hearts; a dangerous blind of Satan.

Seventhly, The policy of Satan improves the esteem and respect men have for the people of God against their great duty and interest to become such themselves, Rev. iii. 1. "Thou hast a name "that thou livest, but thou art dead." It is enough to many men that they obtain acceptance among the saints, though they be none of that number; the good opinion of others begets and confirms their good opinion of themselves.

Eighthly, The policy of Satan improves soundness of judgment, against soundness of heart. An orthodox head against an orthodox heart and life; dogmatical faith, against justifying faith. This was the case of them before-mentioned, Rom. ii. 18, 19. Men satisfy themselves, that they have a sound understanding, though, at the same time, they have a very rotten heart. It is enough for them that their heads are regular, though their hearts and lives be very irregular.

Ninthly, The policy of Satan improves the blessings of God against the blessings of God, blinding us by the blessings of providence, so as not to discern the want of spiritual blessings: persuading men that the smiles of providence in their prosperity, success, and thriving designs in the world, are good evidences of the love of God to their souls, not at all discerning how the prosperity of fools deceives them, and that riches are given often to the hurt of the owners thereof.

Tenthly, The policy of Satan improves comfort against comfort, false and ungrounded comforts under the word, against the real grounds of comfort lying in the soul's interest in Christ. Thus many men finding a great deal of comfort in the promises, are so blinded thereby, as never to look after union with Christ, the only solid ground of all true comfort, Heb. vi. 5, 9.

And thus you see how the god of this world blindeth the minds of them that believe not, and how the gospel is hid to them that are lost.

SERMON XXXV.

2 Cor. iv. 3, 4.

But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

THE words have been opened, and this point observed:—

Doct. That the understandings of all unbelievers are blinded by Satan's policies, in order to their everlasting perdition.

We have shewn already what the blinding the mind, or hiding of the gospel from it is; it hath also been demonstrated that the gospel is hid, and the minds of many blinded under it; you have also seen what policies Satan uses to blind the minds of men, even in the clearest light of the gospel. It remains now that I open to you the dreadful nature of this judgment of God upon the souls of men, and then make application of the whole.

There are many judgments of God inflicted upon the souls and bodies of men in this world; but none of them are so dreadful as those spiritual judgments are which God inflicts immediately upon the soul; and among spiritual judgments few or none are of a more dreadful nature and consequence than this of spiritual blindness; which will appear by considering,

First, The subject of this judgment, which is the soul, and the principal power of the soul, which is the mind and understanding faculty; the soul is the most precious and invaluable part of man, and the mind is the superior and most noble power of the soul; it is to the soul what the eye is to the body, the directive faculty. The bodily eye is a curious, tender, and most precious part of the body. When we would express the value of a thing, we say, we prize it as our eyes. The loss of the eyes is a sore loss, we lose a great part of the comfort of our souls by it. Yet such an affliction (speaking comparatively) is but a trifle to this. If our bodily eyes be blinded, we cannot see the sun, but if our spiritual eye be blinded, we cannot see God, we wander in the paths of sin, 1 John ii. 11. We are led blindfold to hell by Satan, as the Syrians were in Samaria, 2 Kings vi. 19, 20. And then our eyes like theirs will be opened to see our misery when it is too late. "The light of the body is the eye, (saith Christ). If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light; but if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness.

“ If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness?” Mat. vi. 22, 23. By the eye he means the practical judgment, the understanding faculty, which is the seat for principles, the common treasury of the rules of practice, according unto which a man’s life is formed, and his way directed. If therefore that power of the soul be darkened, how great must that darkness be; for now the blind lead the blind, and both fall into the ditch. The blind judgment misguides the blind-affections, and both fall into hell. O what a sad thing is it, that the devil should lead that that leads thee! That he should sit at the helm, and steer thy course to damnation! The blinding of this noble faculty precipitates the soul into the most dangerous courses; persecution, by this means, seems to be true zeal for God, John xvi. 2. “ They that persecute you shall think that they do God service. “ Paul once thought verily with himself, that he ought to do many “ things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth, Acts xxvi. 9. i. e. He thought he had pleased God, when he was imprisoning and persecuting his people, as many do at this day; it will make a man to sin conscientiously, which is a very dangerous way of sinning, and difficult to be reclaimed.

Secondly, It is a dreadful judgment, if we consider the object about which the understanding is blinded, which is Jesus Christ, and union with him; regeneration, and the nature and necessity thereof. For this blindness is not universal, but respective and particular. A man may have abundance of light and knowledge in things natural and moral; but spiritual things are hidden from his eyes. Yea, a man may know spiritual things in a natural way, which increaseth his blindness; but he cannot discern them spiritually; this is a sore judgment, and greatly to be bewailed. “ Thou hast hid these things (said Christ) from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes,” Mat. xi. 25. Learned and knowing men are ignorant of those things, which very babes in Christ understand. They are prudent in the management of earthly affairs; but to save their own souls they have no knowledge. They are able, with Berengarius, to dispute *de omni scibili*, of every thing investigable by the light of nature; yea, to open the scripture solidly, and defend the doctrines and truths of Christ against his adversaries successfully; and yet blinded in the great mystery of regeneration, *Blindness in part*, (saith the apostle) *is happened unto Israel?* and that indeed was the principal part of knowledge, viz. the knowledge of Jesus Christ, and him crucified, we see farther than they. The literal knowledge of Jesus Christ shines clearly in our understanding. We are only blinded about those things which should give us saving interest in him, about the effectual application of Christ to our own souls.

Thirdly, The dreadful nature of this spiritual blindness farther appears from the consideration of the season in which it befalls men, which is the very time of God's patience, and the only opportunity they have for salvation; after these opportunities are over, their eyes will be opened to see their misery, but alas, too late. Upon this account, Christ shed those tears over Jerusalem, Luke xix. 42. "O that thou hadst known, at least in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace; but now they are hid from thine eyes." Now the season of grace is past and gone; opportunities are the golden spots of time, and there is much time in a short opportunity, as there are many pieces of silver in one piece of gold. Time signifies nothing when opportunities are gone; to be blinded in the very season of salvation, is the judgment of all judgments, the greatest misery incident to man; to have our eyes opened when the seasons of salvation are past, is but an aggravation of misery: there is a twofold opening of men's eyes to see their danger, viz.

1. Graciously to prevent danger.

2. Judicially to aggravate misery.

They whose eyes are not opened graciously in this world, to see their disease and remedy in Christ, shall have their eyes opened judicially in the world to come, to see their disease without any remedy. If God open them now, it is by way of prevention; if they be not opened till then, it will produce desperation.

Fourthly, The horrible nature of this judgment farther appears from the exceeding difficulty of curing it, especially in men of excellent natural endowments and accomplishments, John ix. 40, 41. "And some of the Pharisees which were with him, heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind also? Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see: therefore your sin remaineth," q. d. the pride and conceitedness of your heart and obstinacy and incurableness to your blindness; these are "the blind people that have eyes;" Isa. lxiii. 8. *In seeing they see not.* The conviction of such men is next to an impossibility.

Fifthly, The design and end of this blindness under the gospel is most dreadful*; so saith my text, "The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." Answerable whereunto are those words, Isa. vi. 10. "Make the heart of this people fat, and make

* It is a sign of God's displeasure, when men understand not their faults lest repentance follow. *Cypr. Ep. 2.* But to be smitten with blindness of mind, so as neither to know nor lament their faults, is a higher evidence of the displeasure of an angry God, *Cypr. de Lapsis.*

“ make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and convert, and be healed.” So that it is plain, this blinding is a *prælude* to damnation, as the covering of Haman’s face was to his destruction. When the Lord hath no purpose of grace and mercy to a man’s soul, then, to bring about the damnation of that man by a righteous permission, many occasions of blindness befall him, which Satan improves effectually unto his eternal ruin; among which fatal occasions, blind guides and scandalous professors are none of the least; they shall be fitted with ministers suitably to their humours, which shall speak smooth things: *If a man walk in the spirit and falsehood*, (i. e. by an *εν δια δουλιν*,— the spirit of falsehood) *do lie, saying, I will prophesy to thee of wine and strong drink, he shall even be the prophet of this people*: and the slips and falls of professors shall do the devil not a little service in this his fatal design; Mat. xviii. 7. “ Wo to the world because of offences.” This shall blind them, and harden them to purpose. Thus you see what a dreadful judgment this is, a stroke of God upon the soul, which cuts off all the present comforts of Christ and religion from it, takes away the bridle of restraint from sin, and makes way for the final ruin of the soul. A far greater judgment it is than the greatest calamity or affliction which can befall us in this world. If our names suffer by the greatest reproaches, our bodies by the most painful diseases, our estates by the greatest losses; if God strike every comfort we have in this world dead by affliction; all this is nothing, compared with this blinding judgment of God upon the soul; for they may come from the tender love of God to us, Heb. xii. 6. but this is the effect of his wrath; they may cleanse sin, Isa. xxvii. 9. but this increases it; they often prove occasions of conversion, Job xxxvi. 8, 9. but this is the great obstruction to it. In a word, they only wound the flesh, and that with a curable wound; but this stabs the soul, and that with a mortal wound.

First use, of information.

Inference 1. If this be the case of the unbelieving world, to be so blinded by the god of this world; *How little should we value the censures and slanders of this blind world?* Certainly they should move no other affection but pity in our soul: if their eyes were opened, their mouths would be shut; they would never traduce religion, and the sincere profession of it as they do, if Satan had not blinded their minds: they speak evil of the things they know not; their reproaches, which they let fly so freely, are but so many arrows shot by the blind man’s bow, which only stick in our clothes, and can do us no hurt, except we thrust them onward by

our own discontent to the wounding of our spirits. “* I could almost be proud upon it, said Luther, that I have got an ill name among the worst of men.” Beware, Christians that you give them no occasion to blaspheme the name of your God, and then never trouble yourselves, however they use your names. If they tread it in the dirt now, God (as one speaks) will take it up, wash off all the dirt, and deliver it to you again clear and shining. Should such men speak well of us, we might justly suspect ourselves of some iniquity which administers to them the occasions of it.

*Inf. 2. How absurd and dangerous must it be for Christians to follow the examples of the blind world? Let the blind follow the blind, but let not those whom God hath enlightened do so. Christians, never let those lead you, who are led blindfold by the devil themselves. The holiness and heavenliness of Christians was wont to set the world a wondering that they would not run with them into the same excess of riot, 1 Pet. iv. 4. But sure, since God hath opened your eyes, and shewed you the dangereous courses they walk in, it would be the greatest wonder of all, if you should be the companions of such men, and tread in the steps of their examples. Christian, as humble and lowly thoughts as thou hast of thyself, yet I would have thee understand thyself to be too good to be the associate of such men. *Discamus sanctam superbiam, et sciamus nos esse illis meliores.* If they will walk with you in the way of duty and holiness, let them come and welcome; receive them with both arms, and be glad of their company; but beware you walk not in their paths, lest they be a snare unto you. Did they see the end of their way, they would never walk in it themselves; why then will you walk with them who do see it?*

Inf. 3. If this be so, Let Christians be exact and circumspect in their walking, lest they lay a stumbling-block before the blind. It is a great sin to do so in a proper sense, Lev. xix. 14. “Thou shalt not put a stumbling-block before the blind.” And a far greater to do it in a metaphorical sense, Rom. xiv. 13. It is the express will of God, “that no man put a stumbling-block, or an occasion to fall in his brother’s way.” It is an argument of little regard to the honour of Christ, or the souls of men, so to do. O professors, look to your steps; the devil desires to make use of you for such purposes. The sins of thousands of others, who make no profession of godliness, will never so fit his purpose for the blinding of those men’s eyes, as the least slip or failing of yours will do. It is the living bird that makes the best stale to draw others into the net:

* *Superbus fio, quod video nomen pessimum mihi crescere.* Luther. *Gratias ago Deo meo, quod dignus sum quem mundus oderit.* Hieron.

the grossest wickedness of profane sinners passeth away in silence, but all the neighbourhood shall ring with your miscarriages. “A righteous man falling down before the wicked, is as a troubled fountain and a corrupt spring,” Prov. xxv. 26. The scandalous falls of good men are like a bag of poison cast by Satan into the spring from whence the whole town is supplied with water. You little know what mischief you do, and how many blind sinners may fall into hell by your occasion.

Inf. 4. How dangerous a thing is zeal in a wicked man? It is like a sharp sword in a blind man’s hand, or like a high mettle in a blind horse. How much hath the church of God suffered upon this account, and doth suffer at this day: The world hath ever been full of such blind and blustering zeal, which, like a hurricane, overturns all that stands in its way: yea, as we noted before, it makes a man a kind of conscientious persecutor. I confess it is better for the persecutor himself to do it ignorantly, because ignorance leaves him in a capacity for mercy, and sets him a degree lower than the malicious, enlightened persecutor, 1 Tim. i. 13. else it were the dreadful case described in Heb. x. But yet, as it is, John xvi. 2 these are the fierce and dreadful enemies of the church of God. Such a man was Paul, a devout persecutor, and such persecution God afterward suffered to befall himself, Acts xiii. 50. “But the Jews stirred up the devout and honourable women, and the chief men of that city; and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coasts.” An erroneous conscience binds, as well as an informed conscience; and wherever God gives such men opportunity to vent the spleen and rage of their hearts upon his people, they will be sure to do it to purpose. With other men Gamaliel’s counsel may have some influence, and they may be afraid lest they be found fighters against God; but blind zeal spurs on, and saith, as Jehu did, “Come, see my zeal for the Lord of Hosts.” O blind sinners, be sure of your mark before you discharge your arrows. If you shoot at a wicked man, as you suppose him, and God finds one of his dear children wounded or destroyed, what account will you give of that fact to God when you shall come before his judgment-seat?

Second use, of exhortation.

This point is very improveable by way of exhortation. Both,

1. Unto those who are blinded by the god of this world.
2. To those that are enlightened in the knowledge of Christ, by the true God.

First, To those who are still blinded by the god of this world, to whom the Lord hath not given unto this day eyes to see their misery in themselves, or their remedy in Christ, so as to make an

effectual application of him to their own souls. To all such my counsel is,

To get a sense of your own blindness.

2. To seek out for a cure, whilst yet it may be had.

First, Labour to get a deep sense of the misery of such a condition; for till you be awakened by conviction, you can never be healed. O that you did but know the true difference betwixt common and saving light; the want of this keeps you in darkness: you think because you know the same things that the most unsanctified men doth, that therefore there is no difference betwixt his knowledge and yours; and are therefore ready to say to them, as Job to his friends; "Lo, mine eye hath seen all this, mine ear hath heard and understood it: what ye know, the same do I know also; I am not inferior unto you," Job xiii. 1, 2. But O that you would be convinced that your knowledge vastly differs from the knowledge of believers. Though you know the same things that they do, it is a knowledge of another kind and nature. You know spiritual things in another way, merely by the light of reason, assisted and improved by the common light of the gospel; they know the same things by spiritual illumination, and in an experimental way. 1 John ii. 20. "Ye have an unction from the holy One, and ye know all things." Their knowledge is practical, yours is idle. They are working out their salvation, by that light which God hath given them, Psal. cxi. 10. Their knowledge of God and Christ produces the fruits of faith, obedience, and mortification, and heavenly-mindedness in them: it hath no such fruits in you; whatever light there be in your understandings, it makes no alteration at all upon your hearts. The light brings them to heaven, John xvii. 3. Yours shall be blown out by death, 1 Cor. xiii. 8. and yourselves left in the mists of eternal darkness, except your eyes be opened seasonably by the anointing of the Holy Ghost. Conviction is a great part of your cure.

Secondly, Labour to get a remedy for this dangerous disease of your minds: "Awake to righteousness, and sin not, for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame," 1 Cor. xv. 34. These things speak encouragement to you, though it be a sore judgment that lies upon you, and very difficult to be removed: yet remember Jesus Christ is commissioned by God the Father to open the blind eyes, Isa. xlii. 6, 7. and this excellent physician bespeaks you for his patients, Rev. iii. 18. "Anoint thine eyes, (saith he) with eye-salve that thou mayest see." Yea, the most enlightened Christians were once as dark and blind in spiritual things as you are, and Christ hath cured them, Eph. v. 8. "Once were you darkness, now are ye light in the Lord." Attend therefore upon the ordinances of the gospel diligently; that is God's

enlightening instrument by which he cures those cataracts which blind the eyes of men's understandings, Acts xxvi. 28. And if ever you will have your eyes opened, allow yourselves time to ponder and consider what you hear. The duty of meditation is a very enlightening duty: above all, cry to the Lord Jesus Christ, as that poor man did, "Lord, that mine eyes may be opened, that I may receive my sight." Say, Lord, this is my disease and danger, that in seeing I see not. Others see natural things in a spiritual way, whilst I see spiritual things only in a natural way. Their light is operative upon their hearts, mine is but an idle impractical notion of religion, which brings forth no fruit of holiness. Their knowledge sets their hands a work in duties of obedience; mine only sets my tongue a work in discourses of those things which my heart never felt. Lord, open mine eyes, and make me to see out of this obscurity: All the light that is in me is but darkness. O Lord, enlighten my darkness, enlighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death.

Secondly, Let it be a word of counsel and exhortation to such as once were blind, but do now see.

First, I beseech you, bless God for the least degree of spiritual illumination. "Truly light is sweet, and it is a pleasant thing for the eyes to behold the sun," Eccles. xi. 7. But O how sweet is spiritual light! and what a pleasant thing to behold the Sun of righteousness! Blessed are your eyes, for they see God hath brought you out of darkness into marvellous light. And marvellous indeed it must needs be, when you consider how many wise and prudent men are under the power of spiritual darkness, whilst such babes as you are enlightened, Mat. xi. 25. It greatly affected the heart of Christ; O let it affect yours also.

Secondly, Labour to get a clearer sight of spiritual things every day. For all spiritual light is increasing light, "which shineth more and more unto the perfect day," Prov. iv. 18. O! if a little spiritual light be so comfortable, what would more be? The wisdom of God is a manifold wisdom, Eph. iii. 10. The best of us see but little of it. Labour therefore to know spiritual things more *extensively*, and more experimentally, Phil. ii. 8, 9. Be still increasing in the knowledge of God.

Thirdly, Walk as men whose eyes are opened. "Once ye were in darkness, now are ye light in the Lord; walk as children of the light, Eph. v. 8. else your light will but aggravate your sin. Remember how it displeased God, that Solomon's heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel who appeared to him twice, 1 Kings xi. 9. Remember how angry God was with the Heathens for abusing the dim common light of nature, Rom. i. 21

How much more evil is it in you to abuse the most precious light that shineth in this world? and what mischievous effects the abuse of your light will have upon this blind world? It was a smart rebuke given once by an Atheist to a good man, who being asked by him how he could satisfy his conscience to live as he did? Nay rather, said the Atheist, I wonder how you can satisfy yourself to live as you do; for did I believe as you do, that there is such a Christ, and such a glory as you believe there are, I would pray and live at another rate than you do.

THE CONCLUSION.

And now, reader, if all my discourses of the method of Christ in purchasing the great salvation for us, and the way of the Spirit in applying it, and making it effectual to God's elect; thou hast two wonders before thine eyes, either of which may astonish thy soul, in the consideration of them, viz.

1. This admirable grace of God in preparing
2. The desperate wickedness of man in rejecting

} this great
} Salvation.

First, Behold the riches of the goodness and mercy of God in preparing such a remedy as this for lost man. This is that which is justly called "The great mystery of godliness," 1 Tim. iii. 16. that mystery which the *prophets* enquired diligently after, yea, which the "angels desired to look into," 1 Pet. i. 10, 12. In this glorious mystery of redemption, that *πολυποικιλος σοφια*, manifold wisdom of God, or that wisdom which hath such curious and admirable variety in it, is illustriously displayed, Eph. iv. 10. Yea, the contrivance of our redemption, this way, is the most glorious display of divine *love* that ever was made, or can be made, in this world to the children of men; for so the apostle will be understood, when he saith, Rom. v. 8. *Συνιησι την εαυτῆς αγαπην*,—God hath set forth, or presented his love to man in the most engaging manner, in a way that commends it beyond all compare to the acceptance of men. "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners," 1 Tim. i. 15. It might be justly expected, that when this glorious mystery should come to be published by the gospel in the ears of sinners, all eyes should be withdrawn from all other objects, and fixed with admiration upon Christ, all hearts should be ravished with these glad tidings; and every man pressing to Christ with the greatest zeal and diligence. But behold, instead thereof,

Secondly, The desperate wickedness of the world, in rejecting the only remedy prepared for them. This was long since foretold by the prophet, Isa. liii. 3. "He is despised and rejected of men,

“ * a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and we hid our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.” His poor and mean appearance, which should endear him beyond all considerations to the souls of men, (since it was for their sakes, that he emptied himself of all his glory) yet this lays him under contempt, he is looked on as the very off-cast of men †, when his own love to man had emptied him of all his riches, the wickedness of men loaded him with contempt, and as it was prophesied of him, so it was, and at this day is sadly verified all the world over; for,

First, The Pagan world hath no knowledge of him, they are lost in darkness. “ God hath suffered them to walk in their own ways,” Acts xiv. 16.

Secondly, The Mahometans which overspread so great a part of the world reject him, and instead of the blessed gospel, which they hiss at with abhorrence, embrace the blasphemous and ridiculous Alcoran, which they confidently affirm came down from God immediately in that *Laylatto Hanzili* (as they call it) the night of demission, calling all Christians, *Cafirouna*, i. e. Infidels.

Thirdly, The Jews reject him with abhorrence, and spit at his very name, and being blind-folded by the devil, they call Jesus *Anathema*, 1 Cor. xii. 3. And in a blind zeal for Moses, blaspheme him as an impostor. “ He came to his own, and his own received him not,” John i. 11.

Fourthly, The far greater part of the Christianized world reject him ‡; those that are called after his name, will not submit to his government. The *nobles* of the world think themselves dishonoured by submitting their necks to his yoke. The *sensualists* of the world will not deny their lusts, or forsake their pleasures, for all the treasures of righteousness, life and peace, which his blood hath purchased. *Worldlings* of the earth prefer the dirt and dung of the world before him; and few there be among them that profess Christianity, who love the Lord Jesus in sincerity. The only reason why they are called Christians is, because, by the advantageous cast of providence, they were born and educated in a nation where Christianity is professed and established by the laws of the coun-

* חול אישים *Cessans virorum*: i. e. *Infimus hominum, qui citius desinit quam ullus virorum.*

† *Nil habet infelix paupertas durius in se, Quam quod ridiculos homines facit*:—

Juvenal. Sat. III. v. 152.

Want is the scorn of ev'ry wealthy fool,
And wit in rags is turn'd to ridicule.

‡ To put on the profession of Christ's name, and not to walk in Christ's way, what is it but prevaricating with that divine name? *Cyp. de Zelo.*

try ; and if the wind should turn, and the public authority think fit to establish another religion, they can shift their sail, and steer a contrary course.

But now, reader, let me tell thee, that if ever God send forth these two grim *serjeants*, his law, and thine own conscience, to arrest thee for thy sins, if thou find thyself dragged away by them towards that prison from whence none return, that are once clapt up therein, and that in this unspeakable distress Jesus Christ manifest himself to thy soul, and open thy heart to receive him, and become thy surety with God, pay all thy debts, and cancel all thy obligations, thou wilt love him at another rate than others do ; his blood will run deeper in thine eyes than it doth in the shallow apprehensions of the world ; he will be *altogether lovely*, and thou wilt account all things but dung and dross in comparison of the excellency of Jesus Christ thy Lord. To work thy heart to this frame, these things are written, which the Lord prosper upon thy soul, by the blessing of his good Spirit upon thee.

Blessed be God for Jesus Christ !