

A  
**TWO-FOLD  
DISCOURSE.**

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**FIRST.—OF MAN'S ENMITY AGAINST GOD**

**SECONDLY.—OF RECONCILIATION BETWEEN GOD  
AND MAN.**

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Colos. 1. 21.

**AND YOU, THAT WERE SOMETIME ALIENATED, AND ENEMIES IN YOUR  
MIND BY WICKED WORKS, YET NOW HATH HE RECONCILED**



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Colos. 1. 21.

*And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled.*

**I**T is a great and wonderful context, whereof these words are a part, which the time will not allow me to look into ; but presently to fall on the consideration of the words themselves which briefly represent to us ; the wretched and horrid state of men, yet unconverted and not brought to God ; and the happy state of those that are reduced, and brought home to him. The former in these words, " And you that were sometime alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works." The latter, in those words, " Yet now hath he reconciled." I shall apply my discourse to the former part of the words, and thence observe,---that men in their unconverted state, are alienated from God, and enemies to him by their wicked works. This I shall endeavour,---to explain, and shew you the meaning of it:---to evince, and let you see the truth of it, and---apply it.

I. For the meaning of it, it is evident that it is the unconverted state of man that is here reflected upon and referred unto. You that were sometime alienated, and enemies in your mind, by wicked works. They were so, before they were turned to God, he writes to those Colossians as to converts, to them that were saints, and faithful brethren in Christ, (v. 2.) to them that were now believers in Christ, and lovers of the saints, (v. 4.)

telling them, they sometime had been enemies, by wicked works. Before conversion, they had (as is elsewhere said) their understandings darkened, being alienated from the life of God; walking as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, (Ephes. 4. 18.) compared with the preceding verse. This is the deplorable condition of the unconverted world, they are alienated from, and enemies to God by wicked works. We are to consider what this *alienation* from God doth import. It signifies estrangement, unacquaintance with God; and that without any inclination towards him, or disposition to seek his acquaintance. The word is emphatical, it signifies people of another country, you were like people of another country. Of such a different language, manners and behaviour they that are converted are to you, and you to them; you are estranged to their speech, customs, and ways. All that is of God was strange to you, men in their unconverted state are strangers to God. Wicked men do not understand the words of the gospel. (John 8. 43.) What relates to the kingdom of God, the unconverted man dislikes. (Job. 21. 14.) They say to God, depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways. Man, who was originally made for the service of God, and communion with him, is now so degenerated, that he is become a mere stranger to him. The next word to be taken notice of, is *enemies*, which may seem to add somewhat to the former word alienated; there is not only no inclination towards God but there is a disinclination; not only no affection, but a disaffection. The carnal mind is enmity to God, and the effects are obvious. This alienation from God is voluntary, affected, and chosen: men in their unconverted state, are not only strangers to God, but enemies against God, and that in their minds. A most fearful case, full of astonishment, that the very mind of man, the offspring of God, the paternal mind, as a heathen called him, that this most excellent part, or power belonging to the nature of man, should be poisoned with malignity, and envenomed with enmity against the glorious, ever-blessed God! that the mind of man, his thinking power, the fountain of thoughts should be set against God, who gave him this power to think! Yet into this reason must every man's unacquaintance with God be resolved, they know not God, and converse not with him, only because they have no mind to it. That noble faculty in man, that resembles the nature of God, is turned off from him, and set on vain things that cannot profit; as also upon wicked and impure things, that render them more unlike to God, and disaffected to him. *By wicked works* which must have a double reference: to former wicked works, as done by them; and to future wicked works, as resolved on by them.

The former wicked works, which they have done, have more and more habituated their souls unto a state of distance from God. The longer they live, the longer they sin; and the longer they sin, the more they are confirmed in their enmity against God. Future wicked works, as resolved on to be done are also referred to. They purpose to live as they have done, and give themselves the same liberty in sin as before, and will not know God, or be acquainted with him, lest they should be drawn off from their resolved sinful course. For the knowledge of God, and a course of sin are inconsistent things, 1. Cor. 15. 34. Awake to righteousness, and sin not, for some have not the knowledge of God. This is the condemnation, (John 3, 19.) that light is come into the world, but men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil. They hate the light, because they will not have their course altered, they resolve to do as they have done, and that light, which brings with it a tendency to the obeying of God, they cannot endure. But then, as this alienation of mind and enmity, are against the light that reveals God, they finally terminate on the blessed God himself: as God is the term of reconciliation, so he is the term of this enmity and alienation. Wicked men look on God with enmity of mind, under several notions.

*First.* As he claims to be their Owner, when he claims a principal propriety in them, when he insists on his right in them as their Creator, as having made them out of nothing. When God owns or claims them as their Lord, that first signifies he is their Proprietor, or one to whom they belong; but they say they are their own. If we have to do with God, we must quit claim to ourselves, and look on God as our Owner; but this is fixed in the hearts of men, we will be our own; we will not consent to the claim which God makes to us. Our tongues are our own, Ps. 12. 4. Wicked men might as well say the same thing of their whole selves, our bodies, strength, time, parts &c. are our own, and who is Lord over us?

*Secondly.* If you consider God under the notion of a Ruler, as well as an Owner. Why should not God rule over, and govern his own? But this, the spirit of man can by no means comport withal, though it is but reasonable, that he who gave men their beings, should give them laws; and that he who gave life, should also give the rule of life; but this, man, in his degenerate state, will by no means admit of. There are two things considerable in the will of God, which the mind of man cannot comply withal. The sovereignty and the holiness of it.

1. The sovereignty of God's will. We must look on God's will as absolutely sovereign, man must look on God's will to be above his will; so as that man must cross his own will, to comport with a higher will than his. But this apostatized man

will not do, and therefore he is at enmity with God; he will not submit to the will of God, as superior to his will. And then

2. There is the holiness of God's will. His law is a holy law; and the renewed man therefore loves it; but because it is holy therefore the unregenerate man dislikes it.

*Thirdly.* God is considered under the notion of our end, our last end, as he is to be glorified, and enjoyed by us. There is a disaffection to God, in the hearts of unregenerate men, in this regard also. The spirit of man is opposite to living to the glory of God, every one sets up for himself; I will be my own end, it shall be the business of my whole life to please myself. Therefore when God is represented as our end, as in the 1. Cor. 10. 31. whether ye eat, or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God; and as it is in the 2. Cor. 5, 15. No man is to live to himself, &c.—The great design of our being delivered from the law, namely, as a cursing, condemning law) is that we may live to God, (Gal. 2, 19,) I am dead to the law, that I might live to God; this the unrenewed heart cannot comport with. The last and great design of all our actions must terminate on God; now self is set up, as the great idol in opposition to God, all the world over; and the spirits of men grow, by custom, more and more disaffected to God, in this respect. Again, God would be owned by us for our best good. This should be the sense of our souls towards him, so it was with the Psalmist, (Ps. 73, 25.) whom have I in heaven but thee, &c. but says the unregenerate soul, the world is better to me than God. And it is upon this account that when overtures are made of changing this state, the unregenerate mind opposes it. Thus have you this doctrine explained and opened. I come now,

II. To evince the truth of this doctrine, and that by two heads of arguments,—Partly from ourselves, and partly from God.

*First.* From ourselves. It is an alienation and enmity of mind, that keeps men off from God, and reconciliation with him; which will plainly appear,

1. If we consider that our minds are capable of knowing God. Such a thing is the mind of man, which was originally made for such an exercise, as to be taken up, principally, with things relating to God. Our minds can apprehend what is meant by the nature of God, as a Being of uncreated perfection, in whom all power, wisdom, and goodness do meet; who fills heaven and earth, and from everlasting was God. Our minds tell us, that we have a capacity thus to conceive of God; it is in the capacity of man's nature to mind God, as well as to mind vanity; but doth it not. And whence doth this proceed, but from enmity, an alienation of the mind from God?

2. This appears, in that men are wilfully ignorant of God, and are destitute of the knowledge of him out of choice; ignorant, and are willing to be so. This speaks enmity and alienation of mind more expressly and fully. That they are capable of knowing God, and yet are ignorant of him, leaves no other cause assignable; but their desiring so to be, plainly assigns this cause, (Rom. 1. 28.) They liked not to retain God in their knowledge. It is not grateful to them, (Job 21. 14.) We desire not the knowledge of thy ways. Men are ignorant willingly of that God, who made the world, and all things therein, (2 Pet. 3. 5.) For this they are willingly ignorant of, &c. They will not know God, though his visible works shew his invisible power, and Godhead, (Rom. 1. 19. 20.) Now this can signify nothing but alienation, and enmity of mind. Men are willing and industrious to know other things, and labour after the knowledge of them; but they decline the knowledge of God, and his ways, being alienated from God, through the blindness of their hearts, (Ephes. 4. 18.) This heart-blindness is chosen, and voluntary blindness, signifies their having no mind or will to things of that nature. But now the voluntariness of this ignorance of God, and the enmity that this is consequently in it, appears evidently in two sorts of persons.

(1.) In many that are of the more knowing and inquisitive sort, who do all they can to make themselves notional atheists; to blot or rase the notion of God out of their minds. Of them I shall say little, here, they do their utmost, but in vain; it will stick as close to them as their thinking power. But their attempt shews their enmity, for they are content to admit the grossest absurdities into their minds, rather than permit that notion to remain unmolested there: rather imagine such a curious frame of things, as this world is, to have come by chance; than that it had a wise, just, holy, as well as powerful Maker. They would count it an absurdity, even unto madness, to think the exquisite picture of a man, or a tree to have happened by chance; and can allow themselves to be so absurd, as to think a man himself, or a tree to be casual productions. Is not this the height of enmity!

(2.) In the unthinking generality. Of whom, yet unconverted out of the state of apostacy, it is said they are fools, as is the usual language of Scripture, concerning wicked or unconverted men; and that such fools, though they never offer at saying in their minds, much less with their mouths, yet they say in their hearts, no God; that is, not there is none, for there is no *is* in the Hebrew text. The words may rather go in the optative form, than the indicative, O that there were none! The notion is let alone, while it reaches not their hearts; if it do, they

only wish it were otherwise. This speaks their enmity the more, for the notion lays a continual testimony against the bent of their hearts, and constant practice, that while they own a God, they never fear, nor love him accordingly. And they grossly misrepresent him, sometimes as all made up of mercy without justice or holiness; and so think they need no reconciliation to him, he and they are well agreed already. Sometimes think of him as merciless, and irreconcilable; and therefore, never look after being reconciled to him.

3. It appears hence, that men do seldom think of God, when as a thought of God may be as soon thought, as any other, and would cost us as little. Why not as well on God, as upon any of those vanities, about which they are commonly employed? It is a wonderful thing to consider, how man is capable of forming a thought! how a thought arises in our minds! And how sad is it to consider, that though God has given to man a thinking power, yet he will not think of him! God has given to man a mind that can think, and think on him, as well as on any thing else. My body cannot think, if my mind and spirit is gone; though God gave man the power of thought, yet men will not use, or employ their thoughts otherwise than about vain or forbidden things. God forms the spirit of man within him, hath put an immortal spirit into him, whence a spring of thoughts might ascend heavenwards. When we have thousands of objects to choose of, we think of any thing rather than God! and not only turn this way or that, besides him: but tend continually downwards in opposition to him. Yea, men cannot endure to be put in mind of God, the serious mention of his name is distasteful. Whence can this proceed, that a thought of God cast in, is thrown out, as fire from one's bosom; whence is it, but from the enmity, that is in man against God?

4. It further appears hence, that men are so little concerned about the favour of God. Whomsoever we love, we naturally value their love; but whether God be a friend, or an enemy, it is all one to the unrenewed soul, if there be no sensible effects of his displeasure. The men of this world only value its favours, the favour of God they value not; whereas in his favour is life in the account of holy and good men, (Ps. 30. 5,) yea, they judge his loving-kindness is better than life without it, Ps. 63. 3. When men shall go from day to day, without considering, whether God hath a favour for them, or not; whether they are accepted, or not, whether they have found grace in his eyes, or not, &c. What doth this declare, but an enmity of mind, and alienation from God? If men had true love for God, it could not be, but they would greatly value his love.



5. That men do so little converse, and walk with God, doth speak a fixed alienation of mind, and enmity against God. Walking with God includes knowing, and minding him; but it adds all other motions of soul towards him, together with continuance, and approving ourselves to him, therein. Now agreement is required to walking with God, (Amos .3. 3.) Can two walk together unless they be agreed, Hos. 3. 3. Men walk not with God, because they are not come to an agreement with him; God's agreement with us, and ours with him is that we may walk together. If we walk not with God it is because there is no agreement; and what doth that import, but an alienation of mind from God? Says God, I would not have you live in the world at so great a distance from me, I would walk with you and have you walk with me; and for this end I would come to an agreement with you. But sinners will not come to any agreement with God, and thence it comes to pass that they walk not with God; they begin the day without God, walk all the day long without God, lie down at night without God and the reason is because there are no agreements, and that denotes enmity, especially considering,

6. That daily converse with God would cost us nothing. To have any man's thoughts full of heaven, and full of holy fear, and reverence of God &c. (which is included in walking with God) what inconvenience is in this, what business will this hinder? when a man goes about his ordinary affairs, will it do any hurt to take God with him, no business will go on the worse for it, it will not detract from the success of our affairs, 1. Cor. 7. 24. Let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God. Let your state be what it will, there can be no business in this world, but what you may do with God, as well as without God, and much better.

7. Which makes the matter much plainer, how uncomfortably do men live in this world, by reason of their distance from God, and unacquaintedness with him, Job. 35. 10. But no one saith where is God my Maker, who giveth songs in the night. They choose rather to groan under their burdens alone, than cry to God their Maker, as at the 9th verse of that chapter when men will endure the greatest extremity, rather than apply themselves to God, what doth this resolve into but enmity against God?

8. That men do so universally disobey God, bespeaks alienation and enmity of mind as obedience proceeds from love, so disobedience proceeds from enmity and for this I shall only instance two great precepts, wherein the mind and will of God is expressed which I mention, and insist upon (though briefly) as things that concern the constant, and daily practice of every

christian—a course of prayer to God, in secret, and—having our conversation in heaven. How express are both of these precepts, in the same chapter, the former Mat. 6. 6. the latter, ver. 19. 20. 21. Now consider, whether our disobedience to these two precepts do not discover great enmity in our hearts against God. What to refuse to pray and pour out our souls to him in secret so refuse placing our treasure and our hearts in heaven; what doth this signify, but aversion, and a disaffected heart? Let us consider each of them severally and a part by itself. We are a christian assembly, how should it startle us to be (any of us) convicted of enmity against God, under the Christian name, in two so plain cases?

(1.) For prayer it is a charge laid upon all persons considered in their single and personal capacity Mat. 6. 6. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret. I fear that most of them, who bear the Christian name, carry the matter so; as if there were no such place in the Bible. When the mind and will of God is made known to us by his Son, who came out of his bosom, that he will be sought unto; and that not only publicly but secretly and daily; that as we are taught by our Lord himself, to pray for our daily bread, and the forgiveness of our daily trespasses; we are also to pray in secret, to him that sees in secret; can such commands be constantly neglected and disobeyed, and not signify the contrary, bent of our will; especially when we consider, that it is enjoined us for our good? It would be profane to say what profit is it to us to call upon the Almighty but it is most justly to be said, what profit is it to the Almighty, that we call upon him? It is honourable to him, but very profitable to ourselves. If we know not how to pray in a corner, confessing our sins, and supplicating for mercy; we cannot but live miserable lives. When therefore this is not done, whence is it, but from an enmity of mind? To a friend we can unbosom ourselves, not to an enemy.

I might also enlarge upon family prayer, but if closet prayer were seriously minded, you that have families would not dare to neglect prayer, with them too. But if either be performed with coldness and indifferency, it makes the matter worse, or more plainly bad; and shews it is not love, or any lively affection that puts you upon praying, but a frightened conscience only. And a miserably mistaken deluded one, that makes you think the God you pray to will be mocked or trifled with, or that he cannot perceive whether your heart be with him, or against him. And so instead of worshipping him, or giving him honour in that performance; you reproach and affront him; and all this while, how vastly doth the temper of your mind disagree with the mind of God. I would saith the blessed God, have a course of prayer

run through the whole course of your lives and all this that your hearts may be lifted up from earth to heaven, that your hearts may be in heaven every day, according to Matt. 6, 19. Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth; but treasures in heaven. Where your treasure is, there will your hearts be also. And so we are led to the other precept mentioned before.

(2.) As to a heavenly conversation, God would not have reasonable creatures, who have intelligent spirits about them, to grovel and crawl like worms in the dust of this lower world, as if they had no nobler sort of objects to converse with, than the things of this earth; nothing fitter for the contemplation, exercise, and enjoyment of an immortal mind. The saints are finally designed for an inheritance in light, (Colos. 1, 12,) and their thoughts and affections ought to be there beforehand, that they may become meet for that inheritance. Will it do a man any harm to have frequent forethoughts of the everlasting joy, purity, and bliss of the heavenly state! How joyous and pleasant must it be! And why are we called christians, if he, who is our Lord, and Teacher, revealing his mind to us, and expressly charging us to seek first the kingdom of God, to set our affections on the things above, &c. shall not be regarded? Why is not heaven, every day in our thoughts why will we lose the pleasure of a heavenly life, and exchange it for earthly care and trouble, or vanity, at the best? Why is it? no other reason can be given, but only an alienation of our minds from God.

9. Another argument to prove this alienation, and enmity against God, is the unsuccessfulness of the gospel: which can be resolvable into nothing else, but such an enmity. The design of the gospel is to bring us into a union with the Son of God, and to believe on him whom the Father hath sent. Christ seeks to gather in souls to God, but they will not be gathered. This is matter of fearful consideration, that when God is calling after men, by his own Son, that there be so few that will come to him. How few are there that say, give me Christ, or I am lost? None can reconcile me to God, but Christ? You are daily besought, in Christ's stead, to be reconciled, (2 Cor. 5.20.) but in vain! What doth this signify, but obstinate, invincible enmity?

*Secondly.* Another head of arguments may be taken from several considerations, that we may have of God in this matter: whence it will appear, that nothing but enmity, on our parts, keeps us at that distance from God, as we generally are at, and consider to that purpose,

1. That God is the God of all grace, the fountain of goodness, the element of love. Why are men at that distance from him, who is goodness, and grace, and love itself? The reason is not on God's part, 1 John iv. 16. God is love, and he that dwel-

leth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him. What can our so great distance from this God signify, from the most perfect, the most excellent goodness, but the most horrid kind, and the highest pitch of enmity! Did men apprehend this, what frightful monsters would they appear to themselves! This is not only a plain, but a terrible declaration of a most unaccountable enmity, on our part.

2. God is still pleased to continue our race on earth, a succession of men in this world, from age to age, made after his own image, with minds and spirits that are intelligent, and immortal; which declares a strong propension in God, towards such a sort of creatures, the inhabitants of this lower world, though degenerated, and fallen from him. Notwithstanding all their neglect of him, in former ages, yet new generations of men still spring up, capable of knowing, and serving him, Prov. viii. 31. In the foreseen height of man's enmity, this was the steady bent of his mind towards them, to rejoice in the habitable parts of this earth, and to have his delights with the sons of men. Thus also in the 2 Chron. vi. 18, do we find Solomon in a rapture of admiration, on this account: But will God in very deed dwell with men on earth, &c. And the Psalmist, ps. lxxviii: 18. That gifts are given to the rebellious (the most insolent of enemies) that the Lord God might dwell among them. How admirable, and unconceivable a wonder is this! The heaven of heavens cannot contain him, and will he yet dwell with men on earth! And we yet find, notwithstanding God's great condescension, that there is still a distance; whence can this be, but from man's aversion, and enmity of mind against God? Thus are men still requiting God evil for his goodness; God will dwell with men on earth, but men will not dwell with him, nor admit of his dwelling with them; they say to him depart from us. Job. xxi. 14. It is thus, from age to age, and generation to generation, which shews God's goodness on his part, and the enmity on man's part. See to this purpose, Ps. xiv. and liii. the beginning of each.

3. Consider the forbearance of God, towards you, while you are continually at mercy. With what patience doth he spare you, though your own hearts must tell you that you are offending creatures, and whom he can destroy in a moment! He spares you, that neglect him. He is not willing that you should perish, but come to the knowledge of the truth, that you may be saved; by which he calls, and leads you to repentance, Rom. ii. 4. On God's part, here is a kind intention; but on man's part, nothing but persevering enmity.

4. Consider God's large and wonderful bounty towards the children of men in this world, and the design of it, Acts xvii.

25. 26. He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things, that they might seek after him, Ps. lxxviii. 19. He daily loadeth us with his benefits. He gives us all things richly to enjoy, Acts xiv. 17. God leaves not himself without witness, that he doth men good. He gives men rain from heaven, when they want it; and, when unseasonable, he withholds it. It is a great thing to understand the loving-kindness of the Lord, (Ps. cvii. 42.) his wonderful works towards the children of men; to understand our mercies and comforts, and what their meaning, and design is. By mercies to our outward man, God designs to draw our hearts and minds to himself. Mercies are bestowed on them that have the power of thought, to consider the end of all God's mercies; it is bespeaking, and seeking to win our hearts to himself, Hos. xi. 4. It is drawing us with these cords of a man, with bands of love; which plainly shews what the case requires, that the minds and hearts of men are very averse, and alienated from him, and therefore need such drawing.

5. And that which is more than all the rest, is God's sending his Son into the world, to procure terms of peace for us, and then to treat with us thereupon; and that in him he is reconciling the world to himself, 2 Cor. v. 19. Doth not reconciliation suppose enmity, as here, and in the text: you that were enemies in your minds—yet he hath reconciled. As we have noted that on our parts our withstanding, and too commonly frustrating his overtures, speaks enmity, and obstinacy therein; so on his part those overtures themselves speak it too. Here is the greatest kindness and good-will on God's part, that can be conceived; but it supposes; what we are evincing ill-will in us. Christ came to seek and save that which was lost. What a lost was our state! what to be engaged in a war against him that state made us! Wo to him that strives with his Maker, Is. xlv. 9. Fallen man is little apprehensive of it now, if we continue unreconciled to the last, at death it will be understood what a lost state we are in. Upon this account it will then appear, but this was our state before, when it appeared not; in this state Christ pitied us, when we had no pity for ourselves. Christ came not into the world to save men only at the hour of their death, from hell; but to raise up to himself a willing people, that may serve and glorify God, in their life on earth. He is, for this purpose, intent on this reconciling design; and how earnest how alluring were his solicitations, in the days of his flesh! Come to me all ye that are weary—He that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out. How pathological his lamentations, for the unreconcilable! O that thou hadst known the things belonging to thy peace—And his blood was shed at last, as the blood of propitiation, of a

reconciling sacrifice, to reconcile God's justice to us; and thereupon also, as in this context: having made peace by the blood of his cross, (ver. 20.) to vanquish our enmity, to reconcile us who were enemies in our minds—ver. 21, 22.

6. Consider Christ sending, and continuing, from age to age, the gospel in the world; the design whereof may be understood by the manifest import, and substance of it, and by the titles given to it, as it reveals Christ, the Mediator, the Peacemaker, in his person, natures, offices, acts, sufferings and performances. As it contains the great commands of repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, with the promises of pardon, and eternal life, with whatsoever is requisite to our present good state Godward, and our final blessedness in him, as also the various enforcements of such precepts, and confirmations of such promises, with copious explications of the one and the other. And as it is called, the ministry of reconciliation, 2. Cor. v. 18. The word wherein peace is preached, by Jesus Christ, Acts x. 36. The gospel of peace, and of glad tidings, (Rom. x. 15.) as that very word gospel signifies.

This gospel was, in its clearer manifestation, at the fulness of time, introduced with great magnificence, and solemnity into the world, as the law had been, by the ministry of angels. When the Sun of righteousness, the light of the world, was arising, and dawning upon it; then did a multitude of the heavenly host appear, praising God, and saying: Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, and good-will towards men, Luke ii. 13, 14. But this gospel is not a more express declaration of God's good-will, towards men, than their deportment under it, their continuing to live as without God in the world, is of their ill-will, disaffection, and enmity against God.

7. And lastly, the strivings of the Spirit, in the hearts of ministers preaching the gospel, and with the souls of men, to whom it is preached, shew that there is a mighty enmity to be overcome.

(1.) God's giving forth his Spirit to his ministers, enabling them to strive with sinners, to bring them to Christ according to the working of that power, which works in them mightily. Colos. i. 29. What need of such striving, but that there is a great enmity in the minds of people to be conquered, and overcome? Sometimes we read of ministers of the gospel weeping over souls, who, for their too intent minding of earthly things, are called enemies to the cross of Christ, Phil. iii. 18. Sometimes they are ready to breathe out their own souls towards them, among whom they labour, 1. Thess. ii. 8. Sometimes represented as travelling in birth, with them that are committed

to their charge, Gal. iv. 19. There are ministers, whose hearts are in pangs and agonies for the souls of sinners, when the things of God are too apparently neglected, and not regarded by them; and when they see destruction from the Almighty is not a terror to them; and while they visibly take the way that takes hold of hell, and leads down to the chambers of death. They would, if possible, save them with fear, and pluck them as firebrands out of the fire; the fire of their own lusts, and fervent enmity against God, and godliness, and save them from his flaming wrath. Is all this unnecessary? and what makes it necessary, but that there is a counter-striving, an enmity working in the hearts of men, against the Spirit's striving in the ministry, to be overcome?

(2.) The spirit also strives immediately with the souls of sinners, and pleads with them, sometimes as a Spirit of conviction, illumination, fear and dread; sometimes as a Spirit of grace, wooing, and beseeching; and when his motions are not complied with, there are complaints of men's grieving, vexing, quenching, resisting the Spirit, Acts vii. 51. Which resistance implies continual striving. No striving but doth suppose an obstruction, and difficulty to be striven withal; there could be no resisting, if there were not counter-striving; and hereby despite is done to the Spirit of grace. O fearful aggravation! that such a Spirit is striven against! It is the Spirit of grace, love and goodness, the Spirit of all kindness, sweetness and benignity which a wicked man doth despite unto, Heb. x. 29. How vile and horrid a thing, to requite grace, love, and sweetness with spite! As if the sinner should say, thou wouldest turn me to God, but I will not be turned! The blessed God says: Turn at my reproof, I will pour out my spirit unto you, Prov. i. 23. There are preventive insinuations, upon which, if we essay to turn, plentiful effusions of the Spirit may be hoped to ensue: for he is the Spirit of grace. When we draw back, and resist, or slight those foregoing good motions of that holy Spirit: this is despising him. And doth not this import enmity, in a high degree? That the spirit needs strive so much, that it may be overcome, as with some, at his own pleasure, he doth, with others, in just displeasure, he strives no more, and so it is never overcome.

III. We come now to the application, wherein the subject would admit, and require a very abundant enlargement, if we were not within necessary limits. Two things I shall take notice of, as very necessary to be remarked, and most amazingly strange and wonderful, by way of introduction to some further use.

*First.* That ever the spirit of man, a reasonable, intelligent being, God's own offspring, and whereto he is not only a Maker

but a parent, stiled the Father of spirits, should be degenerated into so horrid, so unnatural a monster! What! to be a hater of God! the most excellent and all-comprehending good! and thy own Father! hear O heavens—and earth, saith the Lord, I have nourished, and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me, Isa. i. 2. Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this! and be horribly afraid! be ye very desolate! As if all the blessed inhabitants of that upper world should rather forsake their glorious mansions, leave heaven empty, and run back into their original nothing, than endure such a sight! An intelligent spirit, hating God, is the most frightful prodigy in universal nature! If all men's limbs were distorted, and their whole outer-man transformed into the most hideous shapes, it were a trifle, in comparison with this deformity of thy soul.

*Secondly.* That it should be thus, and they never regret, nor perceive it! What self-loathing creatures would men be, could they see themselves! so as never to endure themselves, while they find they do not love God! but men are generally well pleased with themselves for all this. Though the case is so plain they will not see it; when all the mentioned inclinations shew it, they never charge or suspect themselves of such a thing as this enmity against God! God charges them, and doth he not know them? The pagan world, they are God-haters, (Rom. i. 30,) even with a hellish hatred, as the word there signifies. They that profess his name, are apt to admit this true of the Gentiles: but do we think our Lord Jesus did injuriously accuse the Jews too, that they had both seen, and hated him, and his father? John xv. 24. How remote was it from a Jew, who boasted themselves God's peculiar people, to think himself a hater of God! and what were they, of whom he says by the prophet my soul loathed them, and their souls abhorred me (which is presupposed, Zech. 11. 8.) and most justly, for can there be a more loathsome thing, than to abhor goodness itself! What the most perfect benignity! And those Cretians had received the Christian faith, whom the apostle exhorts Titus to rebuke sharply, that they might be sound in it; and of whom he says, that professing to know God, in works they denied him, being abominable, Tit. 1. 16. Hence is our labour lost, in beseeching men to be reconciled to God, while they own no enmity. Since this matter is so evident, that this is the temper of the unconverted world Godward, that they are alienated from him, and enemies in their minds towards him, by wicked works; it is then beyond all expression strange, that they never observe it in themselves (as the toad is not offended, at its own poisonous nature) and are hereupon apt to think that God observes it not nor is displeased with them, for it. It is strange they should



not observe it in themselves, upon so manifold evidence. Do but recount with yourselves, and run over the several heads of evidence that have been given. Can you deny you have minds capable of knowing God? Cannot you conceive of wisdom, power, goodness, truth, justice, holiness, and that these may be, either more manifest, or in more excellent degrees, even among creatures, in some creatures more than in others; but that Being, in which they are in the highest, and most absolute perfection, must be of God? Can you deny that you have lived in great ignorance of God, much of your time; that your ignorance was voluntary, having such means of knowing him, as you have had? That you have usually been thoughtless and unmindful of him, in your ordinary course? That the thoughts of him have been ungrateful, and very little welcome, or pleasant to you? that you have had little converse with him, little trust, reverence, delight, or expectation placed on him, as the object? That you have not been wont to concern him in your affairs, to consult him, to desire his concurrence? That you have not thought of approving yourself to him, in your designs and actions, but lived as without him in the world? That you have not designed the pleasing, or obeying of him in the course of your conversation? That the gospel, under which you have lived, hath had little effect upon you, to alter the temper of your spirits towards him? That if his Spirit hath sometimes awakened you, raised some fear, or some desires now and then in your souls, you have suppress, and stifled, and striven against such motions? Do not these things, together, discover an enmity against God, and the ways of God? And is it not strange you cannot see this, and perceive a disaffection to God, by all this in yourselves? What is so near a man, as himself? Have you not in you a reflecting power? Know ye not your own selves, as the apostle speaks, 2 Cor. xiii. 5. Yea, generally, men never find fault with themselves, upon any such account! and consequently, think themselves, in such respects, very innocent in the sight of God, and think he finds no fault with them. Now these two things being premised, will make way for the following uses. We infer therefore,

1. That whereas it so evidently appears, that men are at enmity with God, it cannot but be consequent, that God is not well pleased with them. No one is well pleased to have another hate him. God discerns that, in the inward temper of men's minds, wherewith he is not well pleased; namely this alienation of mind from him, this wicked enmity, that is so generally found in them. They are wont to make light of secret, internal sin; the ill posture of their minds they think an harmless innocent

thing. But this he remonstrates against, takes notice of with dislike, and displeasure; and is counterworking this spirit of enmity, not only by his word, but by his spirit of love, and power. Though he doth not testify his displeasure by flames, and thunderbolts; yet he observes, and approves not the course and current of their thoughts and affections: though he permit them, sometimes without sensible rebuke, to run on long in their contempt of him; yet he declares it to be wickedness: the wicked have not God in all their thoughts, Ps. x. 4. He expostulates about it: wherefore do the wicked contemn God, v. 13. threatens them with hell, for their forgetting him, Ps. ix. 17. yet sinners are apt to conclude, that God doth not see, or disallow any thing of that kind, Ps. xciv. 7. How unapt are they to admit any conviction of heart-wickedness! though it is more than intimated to be destructive, Jer. iv. 14. Wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved: as if he had said, thou art lost if thy heart be not purged. Yea, when it is so plain in itself, that enmity against God, which hath its seat in the heart, makes a man's soul a very hell, yet they seem to think themselves very innocent creatures, when they are as much deviled, as a mind, dwelling in flesh, can be! This is the common practical error and mistake men lie under, that they think God takes notice of no evil in them, but what other men can observe, and reproach them for. But he knows the inward bent and inclination of their minds, and spirits; why else is he called the heart-searching God? And knows that this is the principal, and most horrid wickedness, that is to be found among the children of men, an alienated mind from God; and the root of all the rest. The fountain of wickedness is within a man, Simon Magus's wickedness lay in his thought; it is said to him: repent of this thy wickedness, and pray the thought of thy heart may be forgiven thee, Acts viii. 22. And when the prophet exhorts (as before) Jer. iv. 14. to wash the heart from wickedness he adds: how long shall vain thoughts lodge within thee? And our Saviour tells us: out of the heart, first, proceed evil thoughts and then all the other wickednesses, after mentioned; murders adulteries, &c. Mat. xv. 19. And that enmity and alienation of mind, that turns off the whole current of a man's thoughts from God, is the original evil; and, by consequence, lets them loose to every thing else that offends him, and ruins themselves. Yet when their very hearts are such a hell of wickedness (as what is more hellish than enmity against God) they are notwithstanding wont to say, they have good hearts.

2. Hence see the absolute necessity of regeneration. A doctrine, at which most men do wonder, which our Saviour inti-

mates, when he says, John iii. 7. Marvel not at it, namely, that I said you must be born again. But who may not now apprehend a necessity of being regenerate? what will become of thee, if thou diest with such a disaffected mind Godward? Do but suppose your soul going out of the body, in this temper, full of disaffection towards the ever blessed God, before whose bright glory, and flaming majesty (to thee a consuming fire) thou must now appear; though most unwilling, and as full of horror and amazing dread! How will thine heart then meditate terror! and say within thee, "This is the God I could never love! whom I would never know! To whom I was always a willing stranger!" whose admirable grace never allured, or won my heart! who in a day of grace, that is now over with me, offered me free pardon, and reconciliation; but I was never at leisure to regard it. The love of this world, which I might have known to be enmity against God, had otherwise engaged me. It hath been the constant language of my heart to him: Depart from me, I desire not the knowledge of thy ways; I must now hear from him that just, and terrible voice, even by the mouth of the only Redeemer and Saviour of sinners: depart from me, I know thee not. And into how horrid society must I now go! The things that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard; more glorious things than ever entered into the heart, are all prepared for lovers of God. And for whom can everlasting fire be prepared, but for the devil and his angels, and such other accursed God-haters, as I have been, Matt. xxv. 41? Recollect yourselves, consider the present posture, and temper of your souls, and what your way and course is. You care not to come nigh to God now, but love to live at a distance from him, through enmity against him from whence proceeds your departing from him and saying to him, depart from us. But another day, you will have enough of departing from God; a wicked man's life is nothing else but a continual forsaking of God, or departing from him. I appeal to your own hearts, concerning the justice of that mentioned repartee: they say now to God, depart from us, Job. xxi. 14. and God will then say to them, depart from me, Matt. xxv. 41. That man's soul must thus perish, that lives, and dies at enmity with God. Regeneration slays this enmity, and implants, in the soul, divine love. Therefore we must be regenerate, or we cannot enter into the kingdom of God, John iii. 3, 5. A man must have a new heart, and a new spirit created in him, in which heart and spirit the love of God is the reigning principle. And therefore I repeat to you: the things which eye hath not seen—and a crown of life are prepared, and promised to them that love him, 1 Cor. ii. 9. Jam. i. 12. You may yourselves collect the rest.

3. Hence take notice of the seat and subject of this regene-

ration and change. It is the mind of man, for you are enemies in your minds, by wicked works. We are to be renewed, in the spirit of our minds, (Ephes. iv. 23.) to be transformed, by the renewing of our minds, &c. Rom. xii. 2. You that have not considered what regeneration is, I tell you, it is to have your minds altered and changed; that whereas you did not mind God or Christ, your minds being changed, you savour, and delight in the things of God, Rom. viii. 5, 7. They that are after the flesh, savour the things of the flesh. The carnal mind is enmity against God. It is the mind, therefore, not as speculative merely, but as practical, and active, that must be renewed. Inquire, therefore, what change do you find in your minds? Are you in mind and spirit more holy, spiritual and serious? And are your minds more delightfully taken up with the things of God, than formerly? Till your minds are thus changed, they cannot be towards God; but will be perpetually full of enmity, against God. You will only mind earthly things, (Phil. iii. 19, 20.) with the neglect of God, and heaven and heavenly things. If ever the gospel doth us good, it must be by the change of our minds.

4. And in the last place, hence understand the absolute necessity of reconciliation with God; because you have been alienated and enemies against him, by wicked works. Regeneration cures in part your enmity, but makes no atonement for your guilt, in having been enemies; for this you need a reconciler, that could satisfy for you. What will become of the man that is not reconciled to God? If you be God's enemy, can he be your friend? And if God be your enemy, he is the most terrible enemy. How can we lie down in peace, in an unreconciled state? or without knowing whether we are reconciled, or not? Let not the sun go down this day, and leave you at enmity with God. If you have fallen out with a man, the sun is not to go down on your wrath; and is your enmity against God a juster, or more tolerable thing? O let not the sun go down before you have made your peace. And for your encouragement consider that it is the office of the Son of God to reconcile you to him. He is the reconciler, the peace-maker, the maker up of breaches between God and man. He is, if you resist not, ready, by his Spirit, to remove the enmity that lies in your minds against God; and by his blood, he causes divine justice to be at peace with you. If you find the former effect, that assures you of the latter. Bless God that he hath provided, and given you notice of such a reconciler, 2 Cor. v. 19. God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself. Bless God that he hath sent and settled one among you, on this errand, to beseech you to be reconciled to God, v. 20. Blessed is the man, whose ini-

quities are forgiven ; and blessed is the man who can say, I was once an enemy, but now am I reconciled ; formerly I saw no need of Christ, but now I cannot live without him. How fearful a thing will it be to die unreconciled to God, under a gospel of reconciliation ! while the voice of the gospel of grace is calling upon you, return and live ; turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die ? beware of dying unreconciled, under such a gospel. When you return hence, retire into a corner, and consider what a wicked enmity of mind you have had against God, and Christ ; and pray that you may be renewed, in the spirit of your mind, Eph. iv. 23. Let a holy resolution be taken up at last (after many neglects) as was by the poor distressed prodigal, after he had long lived a wandering life, (Luke xv. 18.) and onward ; I will arise, and go to my Father, &c. and you will find God a merciful Father, ready to receive you, and with joy ! Oh the joyful meeting between a returning soul, and a sin-pardoning God ! When once your strangeness, and your enmity are overcome, and you are come into a state of amity, and friendship with God ; then will the rest of your time be pleasantly spent, in a holy, humble walking with God, under the conduct of grace, till you come eternally to enjoy him in glory.

*Peak*