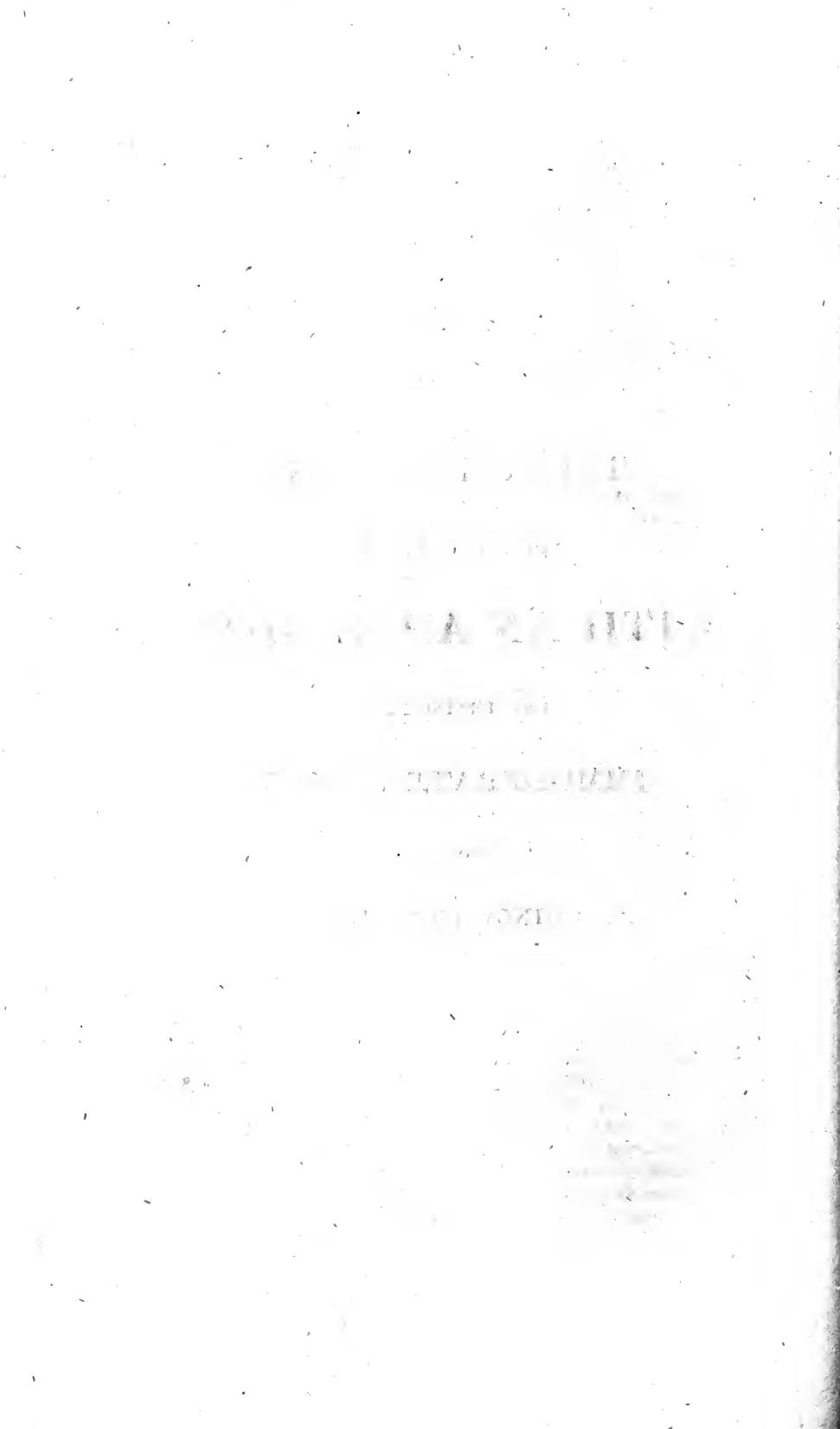


OF
THOUGHTFULNESS
For the *Morrow* :
WITH AN APPENDIX :
CONCERNING THE
IMMODERATE DESIRE
OF FOREKNOWING
THINGS TO COME.

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TO THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE
A N N,
LADY WHARTON.

IT was, madam, the character an ancient worthy in the Christian church gave of a noble person of your sex, that, in reference to the matters of religion she was not only a learner, but a judge. And accordingly, he incribes to her divers of his writings (even such as did require a very accurate judgment in the reading of them;) which remain, unto this day, dispersedly, in several parts of his works, dignified with her (often prefixed) name. A greater indeed than he mentions it as an ill character, to be not a doer of the law, but a judge. It makes a great difference in the exercise of the same faculty, and in doing the same thing, with what mind and design it is done. There is a judging, that we may learn, and a judging, that we may not. A judgment subservient to our duty, and a judgment opposite to it. Without a degree of the former no one can ever be a serious Christian: by means of the latter, many never are. The world through wisdom knew not God. A cavilling litigious wit, in the confidence whereof any set themselves above their rule, and make it their business only to censure it, as if they would rather find faults in it, than themselves, is as inconsistent with sincere piety, as a humbly judicious discerning mind is necessary to it. This proceeds from a due savour and relish of divine things, peculiar to them, in whom a heavenly spirit and principle have the possession, and a governing power. They that are after the Spirit, do savour the things of the Spirit. The other from the prepossession and prejudice of a disaffected carnal mind. They that are after the flesh, do only savour, the things of the flesh.

The ability God hath endowed your ladyship with to judge of the truth that is after godliness, is that you are better pleased to use, than hear of. I shall therefore be silent herein, and rather displeas

many of them that know you, who will be apt to think a copious subject is neglected, than say anything that may offend either against your ladyship's inclination or my own. Here is nothing abstruse and difficult for you to exercise a profound judgment upon: nor anything curious to gratify a pleasant wit. But plain things, suitable to you, upon accounts common to the generality of christians, not that are peculiar to yourself. It is easy to a well-tempered mind, (of how high intellectual excellencies soever) to descend to the same level with the rest; when for them to reach up to the others pitch, is not so much as possible. Our heavenly Father keeps not (as to the substantial of our nutriment, distinct tables for his children, but all must eat the same spiritual meat, and drink the same spiritual drink. He hath not one gospel for great wits, and another for plainer people: but as all that are born of him must meet at length in one end, so they must all walk by the same rule, and in the same way, thither. And when I had first mentioned this text of scripture in your hearing, the savour you expressed to me of the subject, easily induced me, when, afterwards, I reckoned a discourse upon it might be of common use, to address that also (such as it is) in this way, to your ladyship. Accounting the mention of your name might draw the eyes of some to it, that have no reason to regard the authors, and that by this means, if it be capable of proving beneficial to any, the benefit might be diffused so much the further.

The aptness of the materials and subject, here discoursed of, to do good generally, I cannot doubt. Neither our present duty nor peace; nor our future safety or felicity can be provided for as they ought, till our minds be more abstracted from time, and taken up about the unseen, eternal world. While our thoughts are too earnestly engaged about the events of future time, they are vain, bitter, impure, and diverted from our nobler, and most necessary pursuits. They follow much the temper and bent of our spirits, which are often too intent upon what is uncertain, and perhaps, impossible. All good and holy persons cannot live in good times. For who should bear up the name of God in bad, and transmit it to succeeding times? especially when good men are not of the same mind, it is impossible. And more especially, when they have not learned, as yet, to bear one another's differences. The same time, and state of things which please some, must displease others. For some, that will think themselves much injured if they be not thought very pious persons, will be pleased with nothing less, than the destruction of them that differ from them. So that while this is designed and attempted only; generally, neither sort is pleased, The one because it is not done, The other because it is in doing.

It must be a marvellous alteration of men's minds that must make the times please us all; while, upon supposition of their remaining unaltered, there is nothing will please one sort, but to see the other pagans or beggars, who in the mean time are not enough mortified either to their religion, or the necessary accommodations of human life, as to be well pleased with either.

To trust God cheerfully with the government of this world, and

to live in the joyful hope and expectation of a better, are the only means to relieve and ease us; and give us a vacancy for the proper work and business of our present time. This is the design of the following discourses. The former whereof is directed against the careful thoughts, which are apt to arise in our minds concerning the events of future time, upon a fear what they may be. The other, which by way of appendix is added to the former, tends to repress the immoderate desire of knowing what they shall be. Which latter I thought, in respect of its affinity to the other, fit to be added to it; and in respect of the commonness, and ill tendency of this distemper very necessary. And indeed both the extremes in this matter are very unchristian, and pernicious. A stupid neglect of the Christian interest, and of God's providence about it on the one hand; and an enthusiastic phrenzy carrying men to expect they well know not what? Or why? on the other.

Our great care should be to serve that interest faithfully in our own stations, for our little time, that will soon be over. Your ladyship hath been called to serve it in a family wherein it hath long flourished. And which it hath dignified, beyond all the splendour that antiquity and secular greatness could confer upon it. The Lord grant it may long continue to flourish there, under the joint-influence of your noble consort, and your own; and afterwards, in a posterity, that may imitate their ancestors in substantial piety, and solid goodness. Which is a glory that will not fade, nor vary; nor change with times, but equally recommend itself, to sober and good men in all times. Whereas that which arises from the esteem of a party can neither be diffusive, nor lasting. It is true that I cannot but reckon it a part of any one's praise in a time wherein here are different sentiments and ways, in circumstantial matters relating to religion, to incline most to that which I take to come nearest the truth and our common rule. But, as was said by one that was a great and early light in the Christian church; "That is not philosophy, which is professed by this or that sect, but that which is true in all sects." So nor do I take that to be religion, which is peculiar to this or that party of christians (many of whom are too apt to say here is Christ, and there is Christ, as if he were divided) but that which is according to the mind of God among them all. And I must profess to have that honour for your Ladyship, which I sincerely bear, and most justly owe unto you, chiefly upon the account not of the things wherein you differ from many other serious christians (though therein you agree also with myself) as for those things wherein you agree with them all. Under which notion (and under the sensible obligation of your many singular favours) I am

MADAM,

Your Ladyship's very humble

And devoted servant in the Gospel,

JOHN HOWE.

OF
THOUGHTFULNESS
FOR THE
FUTURE.

Matthew, 6. 34.

Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself: sufficient for the day is the evil thereof.

THE negative precept, or the prohibition, in the first words of this verse, I shall take for the principal ground of the intended discourse. But shall make use of the following words, for the same purpose for which they are here subjoined by our Lord, namely, the enforcement of it.

1. For our better understanding the import of the precept, two things in it require explication. How we are to understand the morrow; and what is meant by the thoughtfulness we are to abstain from in reference thereto.

FIRST. By the morrow must be meant: some measure of time or other: and such occurrences, as it may be supposed shall fall within the compass of that time. We are therefore to consider.

First. What portion or measure of time may be here signified by *to-morrow*, for some time it must signify, in the first place, as fundamental to the further meaning. Nor abstractly, or for itself, but as it is the continent of such or such things as may fall within that time. And so that measure of time may,

1. Admit, no doubt, to be taken strictly for the very next day, according to the literal import of the word *to-morrow*. But

2. It is also to be taken in a much larger sense, for the whole of our remaining time, all our futurity in this world. Indeed, the whole time of our life on earth is spoken of in the Scrip-

tures, but as a day. Let him alone that he may accomplish as a hireling his day. (Job. 14. 6.) We are a sort of *ἡμερόβιοι* *short-lived creatures*, we live but a day, take the whole of our time together. Much less strange is it that the little residue, the future time that is before us, which we do not know how little it may be, should be spoken of but as a day. Experience hath taught even sensual epicures so to account their remaining time: "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we shall die." that is very shortly. They were right in their computation, but very wrong in their inference. It should have been, let us watch and pray to-day, we are to die to-morrow, let us labour for *eternity* because time is so short. But say they, "Let us eat and drink to-day, for to-morrow we shall die." A day to eat and drink was, it seems, a great gain. And if the phrase were not so used, to signify all the residue of our future time, yet by consequence it must be so understood. For if we take to-morrow in the strictest sense for the very next day; they that are not permitted, with solicitude, to look forward so far as the very next day; much less may they to a remoter and more distant time. Yea and we may in some sense extend it not only to all our future time, but simply to all future time as that measures the concernments and affairs, not of this world only, but, which is more considerable, even of that lesser select community, the kingdom of God in it, mentioned in the foregoing verse. Which kingdom, besides its future eternal state, lies also spread and stretched throughout all time unto the end of the world. And as to its present and temporal state, or as it falls under the measure of time, it is not un-supposable that it may be within the compass of our Saviour's design, to forbid unto his disciples (who were not only to pursue the blessedness of that kingdom in the other world, but to intend the service of it in this) an intemperate and vexatious solicitude about the success of their endeavours, for the promoting its present interest. That is, after he had more directly forbidden their undue carefulness about their own little concernments, what they should eat, drink or put on; and directed them rather and more principally to seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness, with an assurance that those other things should be added to them. It seems not improbable he might in conclusion, give this general direction, as with a more especial reference to the private concernments of human life, about which common frailty might make them more apt to be unduly thoughtful: so with some oblique and secondary reference to the affairs of that kingdom too, which they were here to serve as well as hereafter to partake and enjoy. And about the success of which service (being once engaged in it, and the

difficulties they were to encounter, appearing great and discouraging to so inconsiderable persons as they must reckon themselves) they might be somewhat over solicitous also.

Nor though they might not as yet understand their own work, nor (consequently) have the prospect of its difficulties as yet in view, are we to think our Saviour intended to limit the usefulness of the instructions he now gave them, to the present time, but meant them to be of future use to them as occasions should afterwards occur. As we also find that they did recollect some other sayings of his, and understand better the meaning of them, when particular occasions brought them to mind, and discovered how apposite and applicable they then were. Luke 24. 8. John 2. 22. So that we may fitly understand this prohibition to intend, universally, a repressing of that too great aptitude and proneness in the minds of men, unto undue excursions into futurity, their intemperate and extravagant rangings and roamings into that *unknown country*, that *terra incognita*, in which we can but bewilder and lose ourselves to no purpose. Therefore,

Secondly. And more principally, by *to-morrow* we are to understand the things that may fall within that compass of future time. For time can only be the object of our care, in that relative sense, as it refers unto such and such occurrences and emergencies that may fall into it. And so our Saviour explains himself in the very next words, that by *to-morrow* he means the *things* of *to-morrow*. *To-morrow* shall take care for the things of itself. And yet here we must carefully distinguish, as to those *things* of *to-morrow*, matters of *event* and of *duty*. We are not to think these the equally prohibited objects of our thoughts and care. *Duty* belongs to us, it falls within our province, and there are (no doubt) thoughts to be employed, how I may continue on in a course of duty, unto which I am, by all the most sacred obligations tied for a stated course, that may lie before me, let it be never so long, and be there never so many *to-morrows* in it. There ought to be thoughts used, of this sort, concerning the duties of the *morrow*, and of all my future time. If it please God to give me such additional time I will love him *to-morrow*, I will serve him *to-morrow*, I will trust him *to-morrow*, I will walk with him *to-morrow*. I will, through the grace of God, live in his fear, service and communion, even as long as I have a day to live. Upon such terms doth every sincere christian bind himself to God, even for always, as God binds himself to them on the same terms. This God shall be our God for ever and ever, he shall be our guide even unto death. Psalm 48. 14. The case can never alter with us in this regard, but as the worthiest object of all our thoughts is yesterday, and

to-day the same, and for ever, so should the course of our thoughts be too, in reference to that blessed object. Every day will I bless thee, and praise thy name for ever and ever. Psalm 145. 2. I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have my being. Psal. 104. 33. The thoughts of our hearts should be much exercised this way, how it may be thus with us, in all future time; that to-morrow, in this respect may be as this day, and much more abundant, as is spoken on a much another account, (Isai. 56. 12.) To-morrow shall be as this day, God assisting, and much more abundant as to my love to him, serving of him, conversing with him, doing and designing for him, which are to run through all my days.

But now for the events of to-morrow, they are things quite of another consideration. They do not belong to us, they are not of the τὰ ἐφ' ἡμῶν, none of the things within our compass. To employ ourselves with excessive intention of thoughts and cares concerning them, is to meddle without our sphere, beyond what we have any warrant for, farther than as it is in some cases supposable there may be some connexion, and dependance, between such and such events, and my own either sin, or duty. Now events that may occur to us to-morrow, or in our future time, you know are distinguishable into good or bad, grateful and ungrateful, pleasing to us or displeasing. Good or grateful events, you easily apprehend, are not here intended. We do not use to perplex ourselves about good things, otherwise than as they may be wanting, and as we may be deprived of them, which privation or want is an evil. And under that notion our Saviour considers the object of the prohibited thoughtfulness, as his after words shew. Sufficient for the day is the evil of it. And therefore gives caution not equally against all forethoughts, about the events of future time; of which some may be both rational, and pleasant. But against forebodings, and presages of evil and direful things. As lest such thoughts should slide into our minds, or impose and obtrude themselves upon us. "Alas! what shall I do to live to-morrow? I am afraid I shall want bread for to-morrow, or for my future time." This our Saviour says is paganish, after these things do the Gentiles seek, that (as is intimated) have no father to take care of them. Your heavenly Father knows you have need of these things, (v. 32.) And directs his disciples to a nobler object of their thoughts and care, (v. 33.) Seek you first the kingdom of God: wherein, as their future reward, so their present work and business was to lie. And then adds, Take no thought for to-morrow, as if he had said; it would be indeed an ill thing if you should want bread to-morrow, and it would be worse if

the affairs of God's kingdom should miscarry, or you be excluded it. But mind you your own present work, and be not unduly concerned about these surmised bad events, God will provide. This is then, in short, the object of this prohibited thoughtfulness—future time including whatsoever ungrateful events, we suppose, and pre-apprehend in it.

SECONDLY. We are to inquire about the thoughtfulness prohibited in reference hereto. It cannot be that all use of thoughts about future events, even such, as, when they occur, may prove afflictive, is intended to be forbidden. Which indeed may be collected from the import of the word in the text that signifies another, peculiar sort of thinking, as we shall hereafter have more occasion to take notice. We were made and are naturally, thinking creatures; yea and forethinking, or capable of prospiciency and foresight. It is that by which in part man is distinguished from beast.* Without disputing as some do how far nature, in this, or that man, doth contribute to divination and prophecy; we may say of man indefinitely, he is a sort of divining creature, and of human nature in common, that it much excels the brutal, in this, that, whereas sense is limited to the present; reason hath dignified our nature by adding to it a sagacity, and enabling us to use propection in reference to what yet lies more remotely before us. And though we are too apt to a faulty excess herein, and to be over-presaging (which it is the design of this discourse to shew) yet we are not to think that all use of any natural faculty can be a fault; for that would be to charge a fault on the Author of nature. The faculties will be active. To plant them therefore in our natures, and forbid their use, were not consistent with the wisdom, righteousness, and goodness by which they are implanted. It must therefore be our business to shew—what thoughtfulness is *not*:—and then, what *is* within the compass of this prohibition.

First. What is not. There is, in the general, a *prudent*, and there is a *Christian* use of forethought, about matters of that nature already specified; which we cannot understand it was our Saviour's meaning to forbid.

A prudent thoughtfulness which imports reference to an end. Our actions are so far said to be governed by prudence, and to proceed from it as they do designedly and aptly serve a valuable end.

1. The foresight of evils probable, yea even possible, to befall us, is useful, upon a *prudential* account, to several very considerable ends, and purposes; either to put us upon doing the more good in the mean time, or upon the endeavour (within moderate bounds, and as more may be needful) of possessing

* Maimond. Mor. Nev. D. Mer. Casaubon. Enthus.

more,—or that we may avert or avoid imminent evils; or that what cannot be avoided, we may be the better able to bear.

(1.) That we may be incited hereupon to do all the good we can in the world, in the mean time, before such evils overtake and prevent us. For prudence itself will teach a man to account (and hath taught even heathens) that he doth not live in this world, merely, that he may live; that he is not to live wholly to himself; his friends claim a part in him, his neighbours a part, his country a part; the world a part. He lives not at the rate of a prudent man—that thinks of living only to indulge and gratify himself, and consult his own ease and pleasure, and upon this consideration, his prudence should instruct him to do all the present good he can, because there are evils in view that may narrow his capacity, and snatch from him the opportunity of doing much. The evil day (as it is more eminently called) is not far off. He should therefore bethink himself of doing good to his friend (as the son of Syrach speaks) before he die. And there are other evils that may anticipate that day: unto which the preacher hath reference, (Eccle. 11. 2.) when he directs, to give a portion to seven and also to eight, because we know not what evil shall be upon the earth. We cannot tell how soon we may have neither power nor time left to do it in.

(2.) And that we may be provided (as far as it lies within the compass of regular endeavour) of such needful good things, as are requisite for our support in this our pilgrimage; and especially, upon occasion of a foreseen calamity approaching. This, as prudence doth require, so we cannot suppose our Saviour doth by a constant rule forbid, who sometime enjoined his disciples to carry a scrip with them, though at another time (that they might, once for all, be convinced of the sufficient care of providence, when or howsoever they should be precluded from using their own) he did, extraordinarily, forbid it. And it is evident that, in common cases, it is more especially incumbent on the master of a family to make provision for his household, for the future; to provide in the more convenient season of the year, as in summer, for the following winter. A document which the slothful are sent to learn from a very despicable instructor. Go to the ant thou sluggard. Prov. 6. 6. &c. And again

(3.) That the approaching evil may, if avoidable, be declined, the prudent man foresees the evil and hides himself, when the simple pass on and are punished; Prov. 22. 3. And, perhaps, for this their simplicity; that they regardlessly go on with a stupid negligence of all warnings, till the stroke and storm fall. Which, whereas there may be one event to the

wise man and the fool, (as Eccle. 2. 14.) will prove to the one a mere affliction, to the other (upon this as well as other accounts) a proper and most deserved punishment. Because (as is there said) the wise man's eyes are in his head, prompt and ready for their present use, the fool walks in darkness, which must be understood of a voluntary self-created darkness, as if he had plucked out his own eyes. Which is the wickedness of folly, as the same Ecclesiastes's phrase is, ch. 7. v. 25.

(4.) That what cannot be avoided may be the more easily borne. Every man counts it desirable, not to be surprized by evils that are unavoidable and no way to be averted. Prudence will, in such a case, use forethoughts to better purpose, than only to anticipate and multiply an affliction, or consequently, to increase its weight; but much to alleviate and lessen it. By learning to bear it; gradually, and by gentle essays to acquaint the shoulder with the burden. To inure and compose the mind and reconcile it to the several circumstances (so far as they are foreseen) of that less-pleasing state we are next to pass into. Which advantage might be one reason why Solomon in the above mentioned place (though according to the genius of that reasoning book he variously discourses things on the one hand and the other) prefers wisdom to folly as much as light to darkness, (Eccles. 2. 13.) though one event may happen to both. It is an uncomfortable thing to walk in darkness; and (supposing there be that wisdom that can make due use of a prospect) not to see an evil till we meet, and feel it. Unexpected evils carry, as such, a more peculiar sting and pungency with them. When any shall say peace, peace, till sudden destruction comes upon them as travail on a woman with child, 1. Thes. 5. 3. Nor can we reasonably think it was any part of our Saviour's intendment, to advise his disciples unto such a self-revenging security who so often enjoins them watchfulness, because of what should come to pass. Or that he should counsel them to the same thing, for which he blames and upbraids the pharisees and sadducees, their not discerning the signs of the times. Upon all these prudential accounts there is a use of forethoughts about future approaching evils.

2. And there is a further use to be made of them upon an account more purely *Christian*. I would tempt none, under pretence of distinguishing these heads, to think they should oppose them. Christianity must be understood in reference to common prudence to be cumulative not privative. It adds to it therefore: opposes it not, but supposes it rather. And indeed it adds that, upon the account whereof we are far the more liable to afflicting evils, and so are the more concerned to use forethoughts about them. For, whereas there are much rarer in-

stances of suffering merely for the duties of natural religion, which the common reason of man acknowledges equal and unexceptionable, we are plainly told that all that will live godly *in Christ Jesus*, shall suffer persecution, (2.Tim.3.1 2.) though not in all times alike. Here therefore it is necessary we have serious forethoughts, of the evils which seem likely to befall us, for the Christian interest, upon several accounts.

(1.) That we may espouse it sincerely. And enter ourselves the disciples of Christ with a true heart. Which we are not likely to do if we understand not his terms, and do not consider the state of the case. What is done without judgment, or upon mistake, is not like to be done in truth. If we fall in with Christ and Christianity upon supposition of only halcyon days, in our time, and that we shall never be called to suffer for him; we shall most probably, deceive ourselves; and prove false to him. It will appear our bargain was void in the making, as to any tie we can have upon him. We are to reckon, when we take on the yoke of Christ, of bearing, also, his cross; and be in a preparation of mind to lose and suffer all things for him. And to use forethoughts of this kind is what he enjoins us, (Luke 14. 28.) under the expression of counting the cost, what it may amount unto to be a resolved sincere christian. And he tells us withal, what the cost is to forsake all, (v. 33.) to abandon father, mother, wife, children, brethren, sisters, and one's own life, v. 26. And all this (as is often inculcated) as that without which a man cannot be his disciple, that is, not become one, as there the phrase must signify! So that though he have come to him, that is, have begun to treat (if a man come to me) and do not so, in his previous resolution, nothing is concluded between Christ and him.

(2.) That, upon this constant prospect of the state of our case we may endeavour our own confirmation, from time to time, in our fidelity to him. For new, and unforethought occasions, that we have not comprehended in their particulars, or in equivalence, may beget new impressions, and dispositions to revolt. Besides all that had come upon those faithful confessors, (ps.44) that they were sore broken in the place of dragons, and covered with the shadow of death, (v. 19.) notwithstanding which they appeal to God, that their heart was not turned back, and that their steps had not declined from his way: and offer themselves to his search, whether they had forgotten him, or stretched out their hands to a strange God. They add, yea for thy sake we are killed all the day long. They reckon upon nothing but suffering, and that to utmost extremity, all the rest of their day, and yet are still of the same mind. Patience must be laid in, that may be drawn forth unto long-suffering. And we are to

endure to the end, that we may be saved. And therefore suffering to the last, is to be forethought of, through the whole course of which state of suffering we must resolve, through the grace of Christ, never to desert his interest. Otherwise we are so deceived, as he that goes to build a tower, without counting what his expence will be, before-hand; or he that is to meet an enemy in the field, without making a computation of the equality or inequality of the forces on the one side and the other; as our Saviour further discourses in the above-mentioned context.

(3.) That we may cast with ourselves how, not only not to desert the Christian interest, but most advantageously to serve it. Suppositions ought to be made of whatsoever difficulties seem not unlikely to be in our case, that we may bethink ourselves how we may be of most use to the interest of our great Master and Lord, upon such, and such emergencies. For such a supposition he himself suggests Mat. 10. 23. If they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another. And it is likely he gives this direction not with respect merely to their being safe, but serviceable, as the following words seem to intimate, for verily I say unto you, ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the son of man be come. As though he had said, "You will have work to do whither ever you come, and will scarce have done all within that allotment of time you will have for it, before the vengeance determined upon this people prevent you of further opportunity among them:" as Tertullian discourses at large, and not irrationally, upon this subject and Augustine to the like purpose.*

(4.) That we may be the more excited to pray for the preservation and prosperity of the Christian interest. Those we should always reckon the worst days, that are of worst abode unto it, though we expect our own share in the calamities of such days. When his interest declines, and there are phenomena in providence, appearances and aspects very threatening to it, there ought to be the more earnest and importunate praying. And that there may be so, our eye should look forward, and be directed towards the events as from whence we are to take arguments and motives to prayer. And we should reckon therefore they are presigned that we may be excited. And a duti-

* Expos. in Evang. Johan. c. 10. If they persecute you in one city, fly, &c. Yet Lord, thou sayst, the hireling fleeth, who is this hireling? He that flies seeking his own things, not the things of Jesus Christ. Thou hast fled (though present) because thou wast silent, wast silent, because thou wast afraid, fear is the flight of the mind &c.

ful love to his great name be awakened in us. What shall be done to thy great name? What shall become of thy kingdom among men? Nor can we ever pray "thy kingdom come" without a prospect to futurity. Yea and all prayer hath reference to somewhat yet future. If therefore all forethoughts about the concernments of future time were simply forbidden, there were no place left for prayer at all. Hitherto then we see how far taking thought about the future is not forbidden.

Secondly. We are next therefore to shew wherein it is. And it appears from what hath been said, it is not evil in itself, for then it must be universally so, and no circumstance could make it good or allowable in any kind. Therefore it must be evil only either by participation or by redundancy. And so it may be, either as,—proceeding from evil, or,—as tending to evil: that is in respect either of the evil causes from which it comes, or of the ill effects to which it tends. Under these two heads we shall comprehend what is to be said for opening the sense wherein it may be understood to fall under the present prohibition.

1. All such thoughtfulness must be understood to be evil and forbidden as hath an ill root and original. As, before, our Saviour, in this sermon of his, forbids somewhat else under this notion because it cometh of evil. What doth so, partakes from thence an ill savour. Those are evil thoughts that participate and as it were, taste of an evil cause which may be manifold. As,

(1.) It may proceed from a groundless and too confident presumption that we shall live to-morrow, and that our *to-morrow* shall be a long day, or that we have much time before us in the world; which as it really is a great uncertainty, ought always to be so esteemed. Men presume first, and take somewhat for granted which they ought not, and make that their hypothesis, upon which they lay a frame of iniquity of this kind, and make it the ground of much forbidden thoughtfulness and care. They forget in whose hands their breath is, assume to themselves the measuring of their own time, as if they were lords of it, take it for granted, they shall live so long; and accordingly form their projects, lay designs, and then grow very solicitous how they will succeed and take effect. By breaking another former law, they lead themselves into the transgression of this, that is, first boast of to-morrow against the prohibition, (Prov. 27. 1) and then proceed unduly to take thought for to-morrow. The case which we find falls under animadversion, Jam. 4. 19, &c. To-morrow we will go to such a city, and buy and sell, and get gain; when as (saith that apostle) you do not know what shall be on the morrow; for what is your life, is it not a vapour? &c.

Would we learn to die daily, and consider that, for ought we know, to-morrow in the strictest sense, may prove the day of our death, and that then, in that very day must our thoughts perish, we should think less intensely on the less fruitful subjects. Our thoughts would take a higher flight, not flutter in the dust, and fill our souls with gravel, as is our wont; and less no doubt offend against the true meaning of this interdict of our Saviour in the text.

(2.) There may be an undue forbidden thoughtfulness about to-morrow, proceeding from a too curious inquisitiveness, and affectation of prying into futurity. Men have nothing here but gloom, and cloudy darkness before them. Fain they would with their weak and feeble beam pierce the cloud, and cannot; it is retorted and doth not enter. They think to re-enforce it by a throng, and thick succession of thoughts, but do only think themselves into the more confusion; cannot see what is next before them. What new scene shall first open upon them, they cannot tell. And (as is natural to them that converse in dubious darkness) their thoughts turn all to fear. And they therefore think the more, and as their thoughts multiply, increase their fear. Whereas they should retire, and abstain from conversing in so disconsolate a region, among shades and spectres, which are their own creatures, perhaps, for the most part; and wherewith they first cheat, and then fright themselves. They should choose rather to converse in the light, of former, and present things, which they know; and of such greater and more considerable futurities as God hath thought fit plainly to reveal. And be contented there should be arcana, and that such future things remain so, as God hath reserved and locked up from us. It is not for you to know the times and seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power, saith our Saviour (departing) unto his disciples, (Act. 1. 7.) when he was now going up into glory. Fain they would have known how it should speed afterwards with them, and his interest. Wilt thou now (say they) restore the kingdom to Israel? It is not for you (says he) to know, &c. If God should any way give us light into futurity it is to be accepted, if we are sure it is from him; and be regarded according to what proofs there are that it is so. As, sometimes, he doth premonish of very considerable events, that are coming on; and, according to what of evidence there is in any such monition, ought the impressions to be upon our spirits. But when out of our own fancies we will supply the want of such a discovery, and curiously busy (much more if we hereupon torment) ourselves to no purpose; this we cannot doubt is forbidden us. But we shall say

more of it hereafter apart by itself. And with this we may most fitly connect,

(3.) That such thoughtfulness about the future is to be concluded undue and forbidden, as proceeds from a too conceited self indulgent opinion of our own wisdom, and ability to foresee what shall happen. For from our very earnest desire to foreknow, may easily arise a belief that we do, or can do so. As a dream cometh from multitude of business, the over-busy agitation, and exercise of our minds about what shall be, makes us dream, and in our dream we seem to ourselves to see visions; and have before us very accurate schemes and prospects of things. How inventive are men and ingenious in contriving their frames and models either direful and dismal, or pleasant and entertaining, as the disposition of their minds is, compared with the present aspect of affairs, which variously impresses them this way or that! If they be terrible and dismal, but raised only upon a conceited opinion of our own great skill and faculty in foreseeing, they have their afflicting evil in themselves our own creature (of itself ravenous) tears and torments us. If they be pleasant and delectable, yet they may become afflicting by accident. For some one unthought of thing, falling out contrary to our expectation, may overturn our whole model and fabric, as a touch doth a house of cards, and then we play the child's part in deploring, as we did in erecting it: fret and despair that things can ever be brought to so good a posture again. But whether they be the one or the other, their sinful evil (which we are now considering) they owe to one and the same culpable cause, that we are so overwise, and take upon us with such confidence to conclude of what shall be: as if our wisdom were the measure of things, or could give laws to providence from which it can never vary. It is not in itself a fault to be afraid of what is formidable, or pleased with what is pleasant (except it be with excess.) But it is our fault to be either frightened with shadows, or to surfeit ourselves with a temporary short pleasure drawn out from them that may, afterward, revenge itself upon us with the sharper torture. When as all their power to hurt us they receive from ourselves. And have no more of reality or existence, than a strong imagination, and confidence of our own undeceivable wit, and sagacity gives them: Who in all the world have minds so vexed with sudden passions of fear and hope, joy and sorrow, anger and despair, as your smattering pedants in policy, such as set up for dons; and who fancy themselves men of great reach, able to foretel remote changes, and see things whose distance makes them invisible to all but themselves? that hold a continual council-

table in their own divining heads, think themselves to comprehend all reasons of state. Are as busy as princes and emperors, or their greatest ministers; mightily taken up in all affairs, but those of their own private stations. And thereby qualified to be state weather-glasses, but prove no better for the use they pretend for, than a common almanack, where you may write wet for dry throughout the year, and as much hit the truth. They that shall consider the abstruseness of designs and transactions that relate to the public, and how much resolutions about them depend upon what it is fit should be commonly unknown; so that they that judge without doors must think and talk at random: and withal that shall consider the uncertainty of human affairs, and that they who manage them are liable to ignorances, mistakes, incogitancies, and to the hurry of various passions as well as other men; especially that shall consider the many surprising interpositions of an over-ruling hand, and what innumerable varieties of paths lie open to the view, and choice of an infinite mind, which we can have no apprehension of; might easily, before-hand, apprehend the vanity of attempting much in this kind, as common experience daily shews it, afterwards. So that multitudes of presaging thoughts, and agitations of mind, which proceed from the supposition of the contrary, cannot be without much sin against this precept of our Lord. And which would mostly be avoided, would we once learn to lay no great stress of expectation upon anything that may be otherwise; and to reckon (with that modesty which would well become us) that we can foresee nothing in the course of ordinary human affairs upon more certain terms.

(4.) Here is especially forbidden such thoughtfulness as proceeds from a secret distrust of providence, from a latent, lurking atheism, or (which comes all to one as to the matter of religion) an only epicurean theism that excludes the divine presence and government, that is, call it by the one of these names or the other; whatsoever thoughtfulness proceeds from our not having a fixed, steady, actual belief of the wise, holy, righteous, and powerful providence that governs all affairs in the world, and particularly all our own affairs, no doubt highly offends against this law. When we have thought God out of the world, what a horrid darkness do we turn it into to ourselves! what a dismal waste and wilderness do we make it! We can have no prospect but of darkness and desolation alway before us. Did we apprehend God as every-where present and active; (*Deum-ire per omnes terrasque tractusque maris---*) that heavens, earth and seas are replenished with a divine powerful presence; were our minds possessed with the belief of his fulness filling all in all, and of his governing power and wisdom,

extending to all times as well as places ; there were neither time nor place left for undue thoughtfulness of what is, or shall be. But by a secret disbelief of providence, or our not having a serious fixed lively practical belief of it, we put ourselves into the condition of the more stupid pagans, and are not only as strangers to the common-wealth of Israel, and the covenants of promise, and without Christ and hope, but even as without God in the world, or atheists in it, as the word there signifies, Ephes. 2. 12. And when we have thus by our own disbelief shut out God, how over-officiously do we offer ourselves so succeed into his place! And now how immense a charge have we taken upon us! We will govern the world and order affairs, and times and seasons. A province for which we are as fit as he whom the poetic fable places in the chariot of the sun. And so, were it in our power, we should put all things into a combustion. But it is too much for us, that our impotency serves us to scorch ourselves, and set our own souls on fire. How do our own thoughts ferment, and glow within us, when we feel our inability to dispose of things, and counterwork cross events, or even shift for ourselves? For what are we to fill up the room of God! or supply the place of an excluded deity! No wonder if troublous thoughts multiply upon us, till we cannot sustain the cumbersome burden. The context shews this to be the design of our Lord, to possess the minds of his disciples, when he prohibits them thoughtfulness, with a serious believing apprehension of providence such a providence as reacheth to all things; even the most minute, and inconsiderable; to the birds that fly in the air, the flowers that grow in men's gardens, the grass in their fields, and (elsewhere) the hairs on their own heads. And certainly if we could but carry with us apprehensive minds of such a providence every-where acting, and which nothing escapes; it must exclude the thoughtfulness here intended to be forbidden.

(5.) Such as proceeds from an ungovernable spirit, a heart not enough subdued to the ruling power of God over the world. Not only distrustfulness of providence but rebellion against it, may be the (very-abundant) spring of undue thoughtfulness. A temper of spirit impatient of government, self-willed, indomitable; that says, I must have my own will and way, and things must be after my mind, and manner, can never be unaccompanied with a solicitude that they may do so, as undutiful and sinful as its cause. A mind unretractably set, and pre-engaged one way, cannot but be filled with tumult, and mutinous thoughts upon any appearing probability that things may fall out otherwise. In reference to an afflicted suffering condition (how ungrateful soever it be to our flesh) a filial subjection to the Father

of our spirits is required under highest penalty. Shall we not be subject to the Father of spirits and live? Heb. 12. 9. To mutiny is mortal, as though he had said, you must be subject, your life lies on it. The title which the sacred penman there fixes on God, the Father of spirits is observable, and ought to be both instructive, and grateful to us. He is the great Paternal Spirit. We (in respect of our spirits) are his off-spring (as the apostle elsewhere from a heathen poet urges, Act. 17.) In this context the fathers of our flesh, and the Father of spirits are studiously contradistinguished to one another. The relation God bears to us as our Father terminates on our spirits. And his paternal care and love cannot but follow the relation, and principally terminate there too. He must be chiefly concerned about our spirits, that they be preserved in a good and healthful state. If therefore it be requisite for the advantage of our spirits, that our flesh do suffer, we are not to think he will stand upon that, or oppose the gratification of our flesh to the necessity of our spirits. And in this case shall not the wisdom and authority of the Father, judge and rule, and the duty of the son oblige him to submit and obey? And whereas it is added (and live?) it implies we are not, upon other terms, to expect a livelihood, to subsist and be maintained. A son in a plentiful, well-governed family, as long as he can be content to keep to the orders, and rule of the family, and live under the care of a wise and kind father, he may live without care, or taking thought; but if he will go into rebellion he puts himself into a condition thoughtful enough. He is brought to the condition of the prodigal that knew not what shift to make to live, till he advises with himself, and comes to that wise resolution of returning. I will arise and go to my father---If we speak of the life of our spirits, in the moral sense (which in the natural sense we know are always immortal) it consists, as our bodily life doth in an *εὐνοασία*, in that holy order, and temperament, which depends upon our continued union with God, and keeping in with him (as the bodily crasis is preserved as long as the soul holds it united with itself.) A holy rectitude, composure, and tranquillity is our life, carries with it a lively sprightly vigour. To be spiritually minded is life and peace, Rom. 8. 6. But if we refuse to submit to the order of God, and offer to break ourselves off from him, this hath a deadly tendency. It tends to dissolve the whole frame, and would end in death if sovereign victorious grace, did not prevent. To be sure an attempt to rebel gradually discomposes our whole soul, and brings in a crowd of thoughts that will be as uncomfortable to ourselves, as they are undutiful towards God; and consequently impair and

enfeeble life : which our Saviour implies to consist in a good healthy, comfortable internal habit of mind and spirit, when he denies it to stand in externals. A man's life consists not in the abundance of the things which he possesses, Luk. 12. 15. All which inward composure and tranquillity depend upon our willing submitting to be governed. What a blessed repose and rest! how pleasant a vacancy of disasing vexatious thoughts doth that soul enjoy that hath resigned itself, and gives a constant unintermitted consent to the divine government! when it is an agreed undisputed thing, that God shall always lead and prescribe, and it follow and obey.

Some heathens have given us documents about following God that might both instruct and shame us at once. It would save us many a vain and troublesome range, and excursion of mind, and thoughts, could we once learn constantly to do so. If upon a journey, in an intricate way full of various turnings and windings, a man have a good and sure guide before him; as long as he follows he needs not be thoughtful or make trials here and there. But if he will outrun his guide, and take this or that by way because it seems pleasant, he puts himself to the needless labour of coming so far back, unless he will err continually. As long as we are content that God govern the world and us, all is well.

(6.) All such thoughtfulness is undue as proceeds from a dislike of God's former methods in what he hath heretofore done. When, because things have not gone so as to please us formerly therefore we are thoughtful and afraid they may as little please us hereafter. Here the peccant cause is an aptness to censure and correct providence: as they Mal. 2. 17. Where is the God of judgment? (we may reckon it a branch from that former root, an unsubject spirit, only shooting backward :) a disposition to find fault with the paths God hath taken, as if he had made some wrong steps, or in this or that instance, had mistaken his way. But he that reproveth God, let him answer it, Job 40. 2. Men are apt to fancy that things might have been better so or so. Hereupon how do thoughts flutter and fly out to futurity! "What if he should do to-morrow, as he did yesterday; in future, as in former time, what a world should we have of it?" There had been some rough unpleasant passages even to Moses himself in the course of God's dispensation towards Israel, while they were under his conduct. But in the review of all, when he was now to leave them, how calm and pacate is his spirit! When in that most seraphic valedictory song of his, (Deut. 32.) his sentence upon the whole matter is, his works are perfect, for all his ways are judgment, (v. 4.) Judgment is

(with us who must argue and debate things before we determine) the most exquisite reason, or rather the perfection, and final result of many foregoing reasonings. So that Moses's testimony concerning all God's ways is that they were always chosen with that exact judgment, as if he had long reasoned with himself concerning every step he took: that certainly he had a very good reason for whatever he did, all as perfectly seen by him at one view, as if (like us) he considered long, before he judged what was to be done.

Could we once learn to sing tunably the song of Moses and the Lamb, Great and marvellous are thy works, O Lord God Almighty, just and true are all thy ways, O King of Saints; to like well all his former methods, to admire the amiableness and beauty of providence in everything, or generally to approve and applaud all things he hitherto hath done, to account he hath ever gone the best way that could have been gone, in all that hath past; we should never have dubious thoughts about what he will do hereafter. And this is no more than what the truth of the matter challenges from us, to esteem he hath some valuable reason for everything he hath done. For sometimes we can see the reason, and are to judge so explicitly upon what we see. And when we cannot, it is highly reasonable it should be with us the matter of an implicit belief that so it is. For though to pretend to pay that observance to fallible man, must argue either insincerity, or folly; the known perfection of the nature of God, makes it not only safe, but our duty to hold always that peremptory fixed conclusion concerning all his dispensations. Indeed concerning some men of known reputed wisdom, it is not only mannerly but prudent, to account they may see good reason for some doubtful actions of theirs, when we cannot be sure they do. Much more may we confidently conclude that God ever doth and must do so. It is not a blind obsequiousness but a manifest duty, which the plain reason of the thing exacts from us. And he justly takes himself affronted and counts it an impious insolence when things look not well to our judgments, then to question his, as he complains in that mentioned place, Mal. 2. 17. Ye have wearied me with your words, yet ye say, wherein have we wearied thee? In that ye say, every one that doth evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and he delighteth in them, and where is the God of judgment? But how free is that happy soul from sinful, anxious thoughts, with whom that conclusion neither is notionally denied, nor doth obtain merely as a notion, but is a settled practical and vital principle, He hath done all things well.

(7.) Such as proceeds from an over addictedness to this world,

and little relish of the things of the world to come. All that ariseth from a terrene mind, that savours not heavenly things. The heart is the fountain of thoughts. From thence they arise, and receive their distinguishing tincture. They are as the temper of the heart is. If that be evil, thence are evil thoughts, (Mat. 15. 19.) if it be earthly, they run upon earthly things, and savour both of it, and the things they are taken up about. This was the case of the disciples, Mat. 16. 22. 23. When our Saviour had immediately before, inquired the common opinion concerning him, and approved theirs, and confirmed them in it, that he was Christ the son of the living God; they draw all to the favouring the too-carnal imagination and inclination of their own terrene hearts. They think he cannot want power, being the son of the living God, to do great things in the world, and make them great men. And reckon his love and kindness to them must engage the divine power which they saw was with him for these purposes. And it is likely when he directs his speech to Peter, and speaks of giving him the keys, which he might know had theretofore been the insignia of great authority in a prince's court, he understood all of some secular greatness; and that there were dignities of the like kind, which the rest might proportionably share in, as it appears others of them were not without such expectations when elsewhere they become petitioners to sit at his right and left hand in his kingdom (the places or thrones of those phylarchs, or princes of tribes that sat next to the royal throne.) Now hereupon when our Saviour tells them what was first coming, and was nearer at hand, that he must be taken from them, suffer many things, be delivered over unto death, &c. Peter very gravely takes on him to rebuke him, Master favour thyself, this shall not be unto thee: no by no means! Full of thoughts, no doubt his mind was at what was said. And whence did they proceed but from a terrene spirit? and that the notion of worldly dignity had formed his mind, and made it intent upon a secular kingdom. It was not abstractly his care for Christ himself he was so much troubled at; as what would become of his own great designs and hopes. Therefore our Saviour calls him satan, the name of that arch-enemy, the usurping God of this world, who had as yet too much power over him, and tells him, "Thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men," as though he had said a satanical spirit hath possessed thee, get thee behind me. And so seeks to repress that unsavoury steam of fuliginous earth-sprung thoughts, which he perceived arose in his mind.

It were a great felicity to be able to pass through this present

state with that temper of mind as not to be liable to vexatious disappointments. And whereas the things that compose and make up this state are both little and uncertain, so that we may as well be disappointed in having, as in not having them. Our way were, here, not to expect, but to have our minds taken up with the things that are both sure and great, that is, heavenly, eternal things: where we are liable to disappointment neither way. For these are things that we may upon serious diligent seeking both most surely obtain and possess, and most satisfyingly enjoy. And the more our minds are employed this way, the less will they incline the other. As no man that hath tasted old wine presently desireth new, for he saith the old is better. The foretastes of heaven are mortifying towards all terrene things. No one that looks over that 11. to the Hebrews would think those worthies, those great heroes there reckoned up, troubled themselves much with thoughts of what they were to enjoy or suffer in this world. To see at what rate they lived, and acted, it is easy to collect they were not much concerned about temporary futurities. Whence was it? they lived by that faith that was the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen, that exalted, raised, and refined their spirits, and carried them above an empty, unsatisfying, vain world. And again,

(8.) All such thoughtfulness is forbidden as proceeds from want of self-denial, patience and preparedness for a suffering state. A heart fortified and well postured for suffering is no susceptible subject of those ill impressions. They fall into weak minds, tender, soft, and delicate, that reckon themselves created, and embodied in flesh, only to taste and enjoy sensible delights: and that they came into this world to be entertained, and divert themselves with its still-fresh, and various rarities. We are deeply thoughtful because we cannot deny ourselves, and bear the cross; and have not learned to endure hardship, as good soldiers of Christ Jesus. Our shoulders are not yet fitted to their burden. Some perhaps think themselves too considerable, and persons of too great value to be sufferers. I am too good, my rank too high, my circumstances too-little vulgar. Hence, contempt, disgrace and other more sensibly pinching hardships are reckoned unsuitable for them, and only to be endured by persons of lower quality; so that the very thoughts of suffering are themselves unsufferable. Whereupon, when the exigency of the case urges, and they can no way decline, they cannot but think strange of the fiery trial, and count a strange thing is happened to them. The matter was very unfamiliar unto their thoughts, and they are as heifers wholly unaccustomed

to this yoke. And now upon the near prospect of so frightful a spectacle, as unavoidable suffering; a mighty resistless torrent of most turbid thoughts, breaks in upon them at once. And they are (as a surprised camp) all in confusion. Sorrowful, fearful, discontentful, repining, amazed thoughts do even overwhelm and deluge their souls. And all these thoughts do even proceed from want of thinking. They think too much now, because, before they thought too little. Whereas did we labour by degrees to frame our spirits to it, to reconcile our minds to a suffering state, (as they do horses intended for war, by a drum beaten under their nose, a pistol discharged or trumpet sounded at their very ear,) did we inure ourselves much to think of suffering, but yet to think little and diminishingly of it, and little of ourselves, who may be the sufferers; I am (sure) not better than those that have suffered before me in former times, such as "of whom the world was not worthy;" we should be in a good measure prepared for whatever can come, and so not be very thoughtful about anything that shall.

2. That thoughtfulness is forbidden too which tends to evil, such as hath an evil tendency.

(1.) Such as tends to evil negatively, that is to no good; all that is to purpose. For we are apt when we see things go otherwise than we would have them, to exercise our contriving thoughts as deeply as if we were at the head of affairs, and had them in our own hand and power, and could at length turn the stream this way or that. But do we not busy our ourselves about matters all the while wherein we can do nothing? when things are out of our power, are not of the $\tau\acute{\alpha} \epsilon\Phi' \eta\mu\acute{\iota}\nu$, belong not to us, are without our reach, and we can have no influence upon them this way or that, yet we are prone over-earnestly to concern ourselves.—And as men (in that bodily exercise) when the bowl is out of their hands variously writhe and distort their bodies, as if they could govern its motion by those odd and ridiculous motions of theirs; so are we apt to distort our minds into uncouth shapes and postures, to as little purpose, more pernicious, and upon a true account not less ridiculous. As our Saviour warns us to beware of idle words, such as can do no work (as the greek imports) so we should count it disallowed us too (for the same reason) to think idle thoughts. The thoughtfulness our Saviour intends to forbid, you see how he characterizes, such as will not add a cubit, not alter the case one way or other, that is, that is every way useless to valuable or good purposes. The thinking power is not given us to be used in vain; especially, whereas it might be employed about matters of great importance to us at the same time. Which serves

to introduce a further character of undue thoughtfulness, namely,

(2.) Such as tends, to divert us from our present duty. Our minds are not infinite, and cannot comprehend all things at once. We are wont so to excuse our not having attended to what another was saying to us, that truly we were thinking on somewhat else. Which is a good excuse, if neither the person nor thing deserved more regard from us. But if what was propounded were somewhat we ought to attend to, it is plain we were diverted by thinking on what, at that time, we ought not. When men are so amused with their own thoughts that they are put into a state of suspence, and interruption from the proper business of their calling, as christians, or men, or when their thoughts run into confusion, and are lost as to their present work, such are, certainly, forbidden thoughts. When they think of everything but what they should think of. A few passant thoughts would surely serve turn for what is not my business. I have business of my own that is constant and must be minded at all times, be they what they will. But when the times generally do not please us, upon every less grateful emergency we overdo it in thinking! It is rational and manly to behave ourselves in the world as those that have a concern in it, under the common Ruler of it, and for him: and not to be negligent observers how things go in reference to his great and all-comprehending interest. But the fault is, that our thoughts are apt to be too intense, and run into excess, that we crowd and throng ourselves with thoughts, and think too much to think well, consider so much what others do or do not, that we allow no place nor room for thoughts what we are to do ourselves, even in the way of that our constant duty, which no times, nor state of things can alter or make dispensable: that is, to pray continually with cheerful trust: to live in the love, fear, and service of God: to work out our own salvation: to seek the things that are above: to govern and cultivate our own spirits: to keep our hearts with all diligence: to do all the good we can to others, &c. As to these things we stand astonished, and as men that cannot find their hands. We should endeavour to range, and methodize our thoughts, to reduce them into some order (which a crowd admits not) that we may have them distinctly applicable to the several occasions of the human and Christian life. And with which useful order whatever consists not, we should reckon is sinful and forbidden.

(3.) Such as not only confounds, but torments the mind within itself, gives it inward torture, distracts and racks it, as the word in the text more peculiarly signifies (*καταμυσαίνω*) to pluck

and rend a thing in pieces, part from part, one piece from another. Such a thoughtfulness as doth tear a man's soul, and sever it from itself. There is another word of very emphatical import too which is used in forbidding the same evil, (Luk. 12.29) *μη μετεωριζετε*, be not in suspence, do not hover as meteors, do not let your minds hang as in the air, in a pendulous, uncertain, unquiet posture; or be not of an inconsistent mind as a critical writer phrases it, (Heinsius,) or as we may add, that agrees not, that falls out and fights with itself, that with its own agitations sets itself on fire, as meteors are said to do. Thoughts there are that prove as fire-brands to a man's soul, or as darts and arrows to his heart, that serve to no other purpose but to inflame and wound him. And when they are about such things (those less-considerable events of to-morrow) that all this might as well have been spared, and when we disquiet ourselves in vain, it cannot be without great iniquity. God who hath greater dominion over us than we have over ourselves, though he disquiet our spirits for great and important ends; put us to undergo much smart and torture in our own minds, cause us to be pricked to the heart, and wounded, in order to our cure, and have appointed a state of torment for the incurable; yet he doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men. It is a thing he wills not for itself. Those greater ends make it necessary, and put it without the compass of an indifferent choice. Much less should we choose our own torment as it were for torments sake, or admit thoughts which serve for no other purpose. It is undutiful; because we are not our own; we violate, and discompose the temples of the Holy Ghost, where since he vouchsafes to dwell, we should as much as in us is provide he may have an entirely peaceful and undisturbed dwelling. It is unnatural, because it is done to ourselves. A felony de se. Whoever hated his own flesh? No man cuts and wounds and mangles himself; but a mad-man, who is then not himself, is outed and divested of himself. He must be another thing from himself, before he can do such acts of violence even to the bodily part, how much more valuable, and nearer us, and more ourself is our mind and spirit? But this is the case in the matter of inordinate thoughts and care. We breed the worms that gnaw and corrode our hearts. Worms? yea the serpents, the vultures, the bears and lions. Our own fancies are creators of what doth thus raven, and prey upon ourselves. Our own creature rents and devours us.

(4.) Such as excludes divine consolation, so that we cannot relish the comforts God affords us, to make our duties pleasant, and our afflictions tolerable; or is ready to afford. In the mul-

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of stoning him: the common calamity imbitters their spirits, and they are ready to fly upon him, as if he had done the Amalekites part, been the common enemy, and the author of all that mischief; in this most perplexing case he was quicker in taking the proper course, immediately turns his thoughts upwards while they were flexible, and capable of being directed, and comforted himself in the Lord his God. All that afflicting thoughtfulness which is the consequent of our neglecting seasonable endeavours to keep our minds under government and restraint, while they are yet governable; and which hereupon renders the consolations of God small, and tasteless to us, is certainly of the prohibited sort.

(5.) Such as tends to put us on a sinful course for the avoiding dangers that threaten us. When we think of sinning to-day, lest we should suffer to-morrow. If it be but one particular act of sin by which we would free ourselves from a present danger, or much more if our thoughts tempt and solicit us to a course of apostacy, which (Ps. 85. 8.) is a returning to folly. The thing now speaks itself, the thought of foolishness is sin, (Prov. 24. 9.) When upon viewing the state of affairs a man's thoughts shall suggest to him, I can never be safe I perceive in this way; great calamities threaten the profession, I have hitherto been of. And hence he begins to project the changing his religion, to meditate a revolt. In this case *deliberasse est descivisse, to deliberate is to revolt*. A disloyal thought hath in it the nature of the formed evil to which it tends. Here is seminal apostacy. The cockatrice egg, long enough hatched, becomes a serpent; and therefore ought to be crushed betime. A man's heart now begins sinfully to tempt him, (as he is never tempted with effect, till he be led away by his own heart and enticed Jam. 1. 14.) And now is the conception of that sin, which, being finished, is eventually mortal, and brings forth death, v. 15.

(6.) Such as tends unto visible dejection and despondency, such as in the course of our walking shall make a shew, and express itself to the discouragement of the friends of religion or the triumph of its enemies. It may be read in a man's countenance many times when he is unduly thoughtful. Cares furrow his face and form his deportments. His looks, his mien, his behaviour shew a thoughtful sadness.

Now when such appearances exceed our remaining constant cause of visible cheerfulness, the thoughtfulness whence they proceed cannot but be undue and sinful. As when the ill aspect of affairs on our interests clothes our faces with fear and sorrow; our countenances are fallen, and speak our hearts sunk,

so that we even tell the world we despair of our cause, and our God. This, besides the distrust, which is the internal, evil cause spoken of before, tends to a very pernicious effect; to confirm the atheistical world, to give them the day, to say with them the same thing, and yield them the matter of their impious boast, there is no help for them in God. And all this, when there is a true, unchangeable reason for the contrary temper and deportment. For still that one thing "the Lord reigns," hath more in it to fortify and strengthen our hearts and compose us to cheerfulness, and ought to signify more with us to this purpose, than all the ill appearances of things in this world can do to our rational dejection. The Psalmist, (Ps. 96, 11, 12, 13) reckons all the world should ring of it, that the whole creation should partake from it a diffusive joy. Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad: let the sea roar and the fulness thereof; let the field be joyful, and all that is therein: then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice, before the Lord, for he cometh, he cometh to judge the earth, &c. He accounts all the universe should even be clothed hereupon with a smiling verdure. And what? are we only to except ourselves, and be an anomalous sort of creatures? shall we not partake in that common dutiful joy, and fall into concert with the adoring loyal chorus? Will we cut ourselves off from this gladsome obsequious throng? And what should put a pleasant face and aspect upon the whole world, shall it only leave our faces covered with clouds, and a mournful sadness?

Briefly, that we may sum up the evil of this prohibited thoughtfulness, as it is to be estimated from its ill effects to which it tends, whatsoever, in that kind, hath a tendency either dishonourable and injurious to God, or hurtful to ourselves, we are to reckon into this class, and count it forbidden us. Wherefore it remains that we go on to the other part of the intended discourse, namely,

II. The enforcement of the prohibition. For which purpose we shall take into consideration the following part of the verse; "To-morrow shall take thought for the things of itself, sufficient for the day is the evil thereof." The evil forbidden is carelessness about the future, as we read it, taking thought, which is a more general expression than the greek word doth amount to. All thinking is not caring. This is one special sort of thoughts that is here forbidden, careful thoughts, and one special sort of care, not about duty but event, and about event wherein it doth not depend upon our duty, that is, considered abstractly from it, and so the thing intended is, that doing all that lies within the compass of our duty to promote any good event, or to hinder

bad, that then we should cease from solicitude about the success. From such solicitude, most especially, as shall be either distrustful, or disquieting, or more generally, that shall be, any way, either injurious to God, or prejudicial to ourselves.

Now for the pressing of this matter upon our practice, these subjoined words may be apprehended to carry, either but one and the same argument, in both the clauses; or else two distinct ones; according as the former shall be diversly understood. For, these words, "To-morrow shall take care for the things of itself," are understood by some to carry, but this sense with them, as though he had said, "To-morrow will bring its own cares with it, and those perhaps afflicting enough, and which will give you sufficient trouble when the day comes. To-morrow will oblige you to be careful about the things thereof, and find you business and molestation enough." Which is but the same thing in sense with what is imported in the following words: "sufficient for the day is the evil thereof." Or else those former words may be understood thus,—“to-morrow shall take care for the things of itself;” that is, “to-morrow and the things of to-morrow shall be sufficiently cared for otherwise, without your previous care. There is one that can do it sufficiently, do not you impertinently and to no purpose concern yourselves.” It is implied there is some one else to take that care, whose proper business it is. The great God himself is meant, though that is not expressly said, the design being but to exclude us; and to say who should not take care, not who should. That is therefore left at large, and expressed with that indifferency, as if it were intended to signify to us, that it was no matter who took care so we did not. That we should rather leave it to the morrow to put on a person and take care; than be ourselves concerned; that whose part soever it is, it was none of ours. A form of speech not unexampled elsewhere in Scripture. “Let the dead bury their dead” only follow thou me; as if he said: sure somebody will perform that part. It will be done by one or other, more properly than by you, who have devoted yourself to me, and are become a sacred person (not permitted by the law to meddle with a dead body, as a learned person glosses upon that place.) And, in common speech, especially of superiors to inferiors, such *antenuclases*, (as the figure is called) are frequent. And the same word used over again, when in the repetition (though here it be otherwise) we intend not any certain sense; more than that we would, with the more smartness and pungency, repress an inclination we observe in them to somewhat we would not have them do, or more earnestly press the thing we would have done.

So that we need not in that expression trouble ourselves to imagine any such mystical meaning, as, let them that are dead in sin bury them that are dead for sin; or that it intends more, than, be not concerned about that matter. And to shew the absoluteness of the command, it is given in that form of words that it might be understood he should not concern himself about that business in any case whatsoever, as if he had said, suppose, what is not likely, that there were none else that would take care; or none but the dead to bury the dead; yet know, that at this time I have somewhat else to do for you: when it is, in the mean time tacitly supposed, and concealed, that the matter might well enough be left to the care of others. So here, while it is silently intimated that the things of the morrow shall be otherwise sufficiently cared for, by that wise and mighty providence that governs all things, and runs through all time, yet our intemperate solicitude is, in the mean time, so absolutely forbidden, that we are not to be allowed in it, though there were none, but the feigned person of the morrow, to take care for what should then occur. Yet the main stress is laid upon the concealed intimation all the while, as a thing whereof he was secure, and would have his disciples be too, that the business of providing for the morrow would be done sufficiently without them. And now according to this sense of those words, there are two distinct considerations, contained in this latter part of the verse, both which we shall severally make use of, for the purpose for which they are propounded by our Saviour, namely, the pressing of what he had enjoined in the former part of the verse. And we may thus distinctly entitle them, the unprofitableness and the hurtfulness of this forbidden care.

First. The former may well bear that title; the inutility or unprofitableness of our care. To-morrow shall take care for the things of itself, that is, they shall be sufficiently cared for without you. Now under that head of unprofitableness, we may conceive these two things to be comprehended:—that we do not need to attempt any thing: and—that we can effect nothing by that prohibited care of ours: that we neither need, nor (to any purpose) can concern ourselves about such matters.

1. That we do not need. They are under the direction of his providence who can manage them well enough himself. And unto this head several things do belong, which if they be distinctly considered, will both discover and highly aggravate that offence of immoderate thoughtfulness. As,

(1.) That, through that needless care of ours, we shall but neglect (as was formerly said) our most constant indispensable duty. That will not be done as it ought. We should study to

be quiet, and do our own business, as is elsewhere enjoined, upon another account. We have a duty incumbent, which, what it is we are told, in the general, and at the same time encouraged against interrupting care, Psal. 37. 3. Trust in the Lord and do good, and you shall dwell in the land, and verily you shall be fed. Some perhaps are apt to have many a careful thought of this sort. "Alas! We are afraid the condition of the land may be such as we shall not be able to live in it." No, (it is said) never trouble your thoughts about that. Only neglect not your own part. Trust in the Lord, and do good, and it will be well enough. You shall dwell in the land, and verily you shall be fed.

(2.) We shall make ourselves busybodies in the matters of another, (1. Pet. 4, 15.) as it were, play the bishops in another's diocese, as the word there imports. We shall but be over officious, and undecently pragmatistical in intermeddling. Our great care should be, when we count upon suffering, that we may not suffer indecently, or with disreputation (in their account who are fittest to judge) much less injuriously to a good cause, and a good conscience. Which we cannot fail to do, if we suffer out of our own place and station, and having intruded ourselves into the affairs and concerns that belong to the management of another hand. And,

(3.) It is to be considered who it is that we shall affront, and whose province we invade in so doing, namely, of one that can well enough manage all the affairs of to-morrow, and of all future time, the Lord of all time, in whose hands all our times are, and all time. A province in the administration whereof there is no danger of defect or error. And,

(4.) It is to be considered that we shall do so, not only without a call, but against a prohibition. It is reckoned, among men, a rudeness, to intrude into the affairs of another uninvited, how much more if forbidden? It gives distaste and offence: and the reason is plain, for it implies a supposition of their weakness and that they are not able to manage their own affairs themselves. And as we thereby cast contempt upon another, so, at the same time, we unduly exalt and magnify ourselves, as if we understood better. Such a comparison cannot but be thought odious. But now take this as an addition to the former consideration, and the matter rises high, and carries the same intimation with it in reference to the All-wise and Almighty God. No? Is not he likely to bring matters to any good pass without us? And are we therefore so concernedly looking over the shoulder; thrusting in our eye, and sending forth our cares to run and range into his affairs and business? This is a wearisome impertinence. A prudent man would not endure it.

Nor are those words unapplicable to this purpose, "seems it a small thing to you to weary men, but you will weary my God also?" Isa. 7. 13. They were spoken to a purpose not unlike. For observe the occasion. There were at that time the two kings with their combined power, of Syria and Israel come up against Jerusalem and the house of David, meaning the king Ahaz. It is said hereupon of him, and the people with him, "Their hearts were moved as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind." Full of thoughts, of cares and fears they were, no doubt. O! what will become of this matter? what will be the event? And the prophet comes with a comfortable message to them from God. But their hearts were so pre-possessed with their own fears, it signifies nothing. A confirmation is offered, and refused. The pretence was, he would not tempt God by asking a sign even when he was bidden. A hypocritical pretence, made only to cover a latent distrust. Thereupon, saith the prophet, is it a small thing to weary men (meaning himself who was but the messenger) but that you will weary my God also? that is who sent him; and who went not about to put the affrighted prince, and his people, upon anything, but to trust him and be quiet: no agitation of whose minds was required to their safety. They are not directed, as if all lay upon them, to hold a council, and contrive, themselves, (at this time) the means of their preservation. Nor should they, with disturbed minds. Neither are we (in the sense that hath been given) required or allowed to use our care in reference to the things of to-morrow. The stress of affairs lies not upon us. The events that belong to to-morrow, or the future time, whatever it be, will be brought about, whether we so care or care not. Our anxiety is needless in the case. What will not to-morrow come and carry all its events in it that belong to it, without us? will not the heavens roll without us? and the sun rise and set? the evening come and also the morn? the days, and all that belongs to the several days of succeeding time? will not all be brought about without our care think we? how was it before we were born?

2. There is also comprehended besides, under that head of unprofitableness, our impotency to effect anything by our care. As we do not need, so nor are we able. That is unprofitable, which will not serve our turn, nor do our business. This forbidden care leaves things but as we found them. It is true, that may be some way useful, that is not absolutely necessary, but if besides that no necessity there be also an absolute uselessness, the argument is much stronger. All this prohibited care of ours cannot contribute anything, to the hindering of bad events or

promoting of good. And that, neither as to our own private affairs nor, much less as to those that are of public concernment.

(1.) Not as to our own private affairs, which the series of our Saviour's discourse hath directer reference unto, what we shall eat, and drink, and how be clothed. How to maintain and support life, and add to our days and the comfort of them. We cannot add (it is said) so much as one cubit (v. 27.) to our stature. So we read that word, which perhaps (by the way) as a noted expositor observes, may better be read *age*. The word signifies both. It would seem indeed something an enormous addition to have a cubit added to the stature of a grown man, but the same word (*ἡλικία*) signifying also *age*, that seems here the fitter translation. It is therefore as if he had said, "Which of you by taking thought can make the least addition to his own time? Nor is it unusual to speak of measures of that kind, in relation to time, as a span, a hand-breath, and the like. And so is cubit as capable of the same application. Our anxiety can neither add more nor less.

(2.) Much less can it influence the common and public affairs. Our solicitude, what will become of these things? how shall the christian or protestant interest subsist? much more how shall it ever come to thrive and prosper in the world? so low, so depressed and despised as it may seem? how will it be with it to-morrow? or hereafter in future time? what doth it contribute? I speak not of the exclusion of prayer, nor of a dutiful, affectionate concernedness, that excludes not a cheerful, submissive trust; and what will more than this avail? If we add more, will that addition mend the matter; or do we indeed think, when the doing of our duty prevails not, that our anxiety and care beyond our duty shall? Can that change times and seasons, and mend the state of things to-morrow or the next day? Will to-morrow become, by means of it, a fairer or a calmer day, or be without it a more stormy one? We might as well think by our care, to order the celestial motions, to govern the tides, and retard or hasten the ebbs and floods; or by our breath check and countermand the course of the greatest rivers. We, indeed and all things that time contains and measures, are carried as in a swift stream, or on rapid floods. And a man, at sea, might as well attempt, by thrusting or pulling the sides of the ship that carries him, to hasten or slacken its motion, as we by our vexatious care to check or alter the motions of providence this way or that. Do we think to posture things otherwise than God hath done? Will we move the earth from its centre? Where will we find another earth whereon to set our foot?

Secondly. We have to consider not only the unprofitableness but hurtfulness of this forbidden care. It not only doth no good, but it is sure to do us a great deal of harm. That is the consideration intimated in the latter words, "sufficient for the day is the evil thereof." We shall but accumulate evils unto ourselves by it, to no purpose. Our undue solicitude cannot add to our time or comforts (as was said) but it may much diminish, and detract from them. Whereas every several day that passeth, may have enough in it, and be of itself sufficiently fraught with perplexity, trouble, and sorrow. All that, added to the foregoing burden of excessively careful forethoughts, may overwhelm and sink us. There are sundry particular considerations that fall in here also.

1. That by this means we shall suffer the same thing over and over, which we needed not suffer more than once. It obtained for a proverb among the †Arabians, "An affliction is but one to him that suffers it, but to him that with fear expects it, double." I shall suffer the evil of to-morrow this day and to-morrow too. Yea, and by this course, I may bring all the evil of all my future time, into each several day, and may suffer the same affliction a thousand times over, which the benignity of providence meant, only, for my present exercise, when he should think it most fit and seasonable to lay it on.

2. I may, by this means, suffer, in my own foreboding imagination, many things that really, I shall never suffer at all, for the events may never happen, the forethoughts whereof do now afflict me. And what a foolish thing it is to be troubled before-hand at that which for ought I know will never be, and to make a certain evil of an uncertain!

3. And it is further to be considered, that all the trouble I suffer in this kind is self trouble. We therein but afflict ourselves. And it adds a great sting to affliction that I am the author of it to myself. For besides the unnaturalness of being a self-tormentor (which was formerly noted) it is the more afflicting, upon review, by how much more easily it was avoidable. We are stung with the reflection on our own folly, as any man is apt to be, when he considers his having run himself into trouble, which, by an ordinary prudence he might have escaped. With what regret may one look back, upon many by-past days, wherein I might have served God with cheerfulness in my calling, "walking in the light of the Lord," which I have turned into days of pensive darkness, to myself, by only my own

† The collection of Arabian proverbs illustrated by the notes of Jos. Scalig. and Erpen.

and rend a thing in pieces, part from part, one piece from another. Such a thoughtfulness as doth tear a man's soul, and sever it from itself. There is another word of very emphatical import too which is used in forbidding the same evil, (Luk. 12.29) *μη μετεωριζετε*, be not in suspence, do not hover as meteors, do not let your minds hang as in the air, in a pendulous, uncertain, unquiet posture; or be not of an inconsistent mind as a critical writer phrases it, (Heinsius,) or as we may add, that agrees not, that falls out and fights with itself, that with its own agitations sets itself on fire, as meteors are said to do. Thoughts there are that prove as fire-brands to a man's soul, or as darts and arrows to his heart, that serve to no other purpose but to inflame and wound him. And when they are about such things (those less-considerable events of to-morrow) that all this might as well have been spared, and when we disquiet ourselves in vain, it cannot be without great iniquity. God who hath greater dominion over us than we have over ourselves, though he disquiet our spirits for great and important ends; put us to undergo much smart and torture in our own minds, cause us to be pricked to the heart, and wounded, in order to our cure, and have appointed a state of torment for the incurable; yet he doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men. It is a thing he wills not for itself. Those greater ends make it necessary, and put it without the compass of an indifferent choice. Much less should we choose our own torment as it were for torments sake, or admit thoughts which serve for no other purpose. It is undutiful; because we are not our own; we violate, and discompose the temples of the Holy Ghost, where since he vouchsafes to dwell, we should as much as in us is provide he may have an entirely peaceful and undisturbed dwelling. It is unnatural, because it is done to ourselves. A felony de se. Whoever hated his own flesh? No man cuts and wounds and mangles himself; but a mad-man, who is then not himself, is outed and divested of himself. He must be another thing from himself, before he can do such acts of violence even to the bodily part, how much more valuable, and nearer us, and more ourself is our mind and spirit? But this is the case in the matter of inordinate thoughts and care. We breed the worms that gnaw and corrode our hearts. Worms? yea the serpents, the vultures, the bears and lions. Our own fancies are creators of what doth thus raven, and prey upon ourselves. Our own creature rents and devours us.

(4.) Such as excludes divine consolation, so that we cannot relish the comforts God affords us, to make our duties pleasant, and our afflictions tolerable; or is ready to afford. In the mul-

titude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my soul, Ps. 94. 19. Those thoughts, if they were afflicting and troublesome, they were not so without some due measure or limit, while they did not so fill the whole soul as to exclude so needful a mixture. But how intolerably sinful a state is it when the soul is so filled, and taken up, prepossessed already, with its own black thoughts, that there is no room for better! And its self-created cloud is so thick and dark that it resists the heavenly beams, and admits them not in the ordinary way to enter and insinuate. When the disease defies the remedy, and the soul refuses to be comforted, as Ps. 77. 2. This seems to have been the Psalmist's case, not that he took up an explicit, formed resolution against being comforted; but that the present habit of his mind and spirit was such that it did not enter with him; and that the usual course did not succeed in order to it, for it follows, "I thought on God and was troubled," which needs not to be understood so, as if the thoughts of God troubled him, but though he did think of God he was yet troubled. The thoughts of God were not the cause of his trouble, but the ineffectual means of his relief. Still he was troubled notwithstanding he thought of God, not because. For you see he was otherwise troubled, and says, "In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord." He took the course which was wont not to fail, but his mind was so full of troublous thoughts before, that when he remembered God, it proved but a weak essay. The strength of his soul was pre-engaged the other way, and the stream was too violent to be checked by that feebler breath which he now only had to oppose it. Though God can arbitrarily, and often doth, put forth that power as to break and scatter the cloud, and make all clear up on a sudden; yet also, often, he withholds in some displeasure that more potent influence, and leaves things to follow, with us, their own natural course, lets our own sin correct us, and suffers us to feel the smart of our own rod. For we should have withstood beginnings, and have been more early in applying the remedy before things had come to this ill pass. Because we did not when we better could, set ourselves to consider, and strive and pray effectually, the distemper of our spirits is now grown to that height that we would and cannot. In that great distress which befel David at Ziklag, when he finds his goods rifled, his nearest relatives made captives, that city itself the place of his repose, the solace of his exile, reduced to a ruinous heap; his guard, his friends, the companions of his flight, and partakers of all his troubles and dangers, become his most dangerous enemies, for they mutiny and conspire against him, and speak

of all the divine laws, that they are visibly, and with admirable suitableness, contrived for the good and felicity of mankind, and seem but obligations upon us to be happy. Such as in the keeping whereof there is great reward. Ps. 19. 11. And, in this particular one, how observably hath our Lord, as it were studied our quiet, and the repose of our minds! How (especially) doth the benignity and kindness of the holy Law-giver appear in it! upon comparing this consideration with the precept itself. Take no thought for to-morrow, sufficient for the day is the evil of it. As though he had said I would not have you over-burdened; I would have you be without care. It imports a tenderness of our present comfort; which he many other ways expresses of our future safety and blessedness. As though he should say, I would have you go comfortably through the world, where you are in a pilgrimage and a wayfaring condition; I would not have you oppressed, nor your spirits bowed down with too heavy a burden. And it is elsewhere inculcated. Casting all your care on him, for he careth for you, (1 Pet. 5. 7.) In nothing be careful (Phil. 4. 6.) but, in all things, let your requests be made known to God, with thanksgiving; and the peace of God (so it immediately follows) which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds. Commit thy way to the Lord, devolve it on him, as the word signifies, Ps. 37. 5. trust also in him, and he will bring it to pass. If we be so wise as to observe his rule and design, we shall be wise for ourselves. And that tranquillity and calmness of spirit, which many heathens have so highly magnified, and which their philosophy sought, our religion will possess and enjoy. But if we neglect, and disregard him herein; we shall bring an evil into to-day that neither belongs to this day, nor to any other. It is true indeed, God doth often point us out the day, wherein we must suffer such and such external evils, and as it were say to us, "Now is your day of suffering." Sometimes by his providence alone, when I have no way of escape; sometimes by the concurrence of his word and providence, when the one hems me in, on the one hand, the other on the other. He hath now set me a day for suffering, in this or that kind, but none for sinning in this kind, nor in any other. Why shall I draw in evils to this day, from to-morrow, that belong neither to this day nor to to-morrow.

The sum is, whether we regard our innocency or our peace, whether we would express reverence to God, or a due regard to ourselves. If we would do the part either of pious and religious or of rational and prudent men, we are to lay a restraint upon ourselves in this matter. Have we nothing to employ our

thoughts about, that concerns us more? nothing wherein we may use them to better purpose? Is there nothing wherein we are more left at liberty? or nothing about which we are more bound in duty to think? Unless we reckon that thoughts are absolutely free, and that we may use our thinking power as we please; and that the divine government doth not extend to our minds? (which if it do not, we confound God's government, and man's, and there is an end of all internal sin and duty; and of the first and most radical differences of moral good and evil) we can never justify ourselves in such a range of thoughts and cares, as this we have been speaking of. And it is very unreasonable to continue a course we cannot justify. A transient action done against a formed judgment would be reflected on with regret and shame by such as are not arrived to that pitch as not to care what they do. But to persist in a condemned course of actions, must much more, argue a profligate conscience enfeebled and mortified to that degree as to have little sense left of right and wrong. Where it is so, somewhat else is requisite to a cure, than mere representing the evil of that course. What that can do hath been tried already. And when men have been once used to victory, over their own judgments, and consciences; every former defeat makes the next the easier; till at length, light and conscience become such contemptible baffled things, as to signify nothing at all, to the governing of practice, this way or that.

The only thing that can work a redress, is to get the temper of our spirits cured; which will mightily facilitate the work and business of conscience, and is necessary, even where it is most lively and vigorous. For to be only quick at discerning what we should be, and do, signifies little against a disinclined heart. Therefore for the rectifying of that, and that our inclinations, as well as our judgments, may concur, and fall in with our duty in this matter, I will only recommend in order hereto by way of direction (among many that might be thought on) these two things.

(1.) That we use more earnest endeavour to be, habitually, under government, in reference to our thoughts, and the inward workings of our spirits. For can we doubt of the obligation of the many precepts that concern, immediately, the inner man? to love, to trust, to fear, to rejoice in God, &c.? What becomes of all religion, if the vital principles of it be thought unnecessary? Do not all the laws of God that enjoins us any duty, lay their first obligation upon our inward man? Or do they only oblige us to be hypocrites? and to seem what we are not? And why do we here distinguish; and think that, by some precepts,

God intends to oblige us ; and by others he means no such thing, but to leave us to our liberty ? Or would not those which we will confess more indispensable (namely, such as have been instanced in) exclude the careful thoughts, we speak of, about the events of to-morrow ? For can a heart much conversant in the explicit acts of love to God, trust in him, the fear of him, &c. be much liable to these forbidden cares ?

Nor, surely, can it be matter of doubt with us, whether God observe the thoughts and motions of our souls ? For can we think that he will give rules about things wherein he will exercise no judgment ? The Lord knoweth the thoughts of man that they are vanity ; (Ps. 94.) and are any more vain than these ? Do we christians need a heathen instructor to tell us, “ We ought always so to live, as under view ; and so to think, as if there were some one that may, and can, inspect and look into our innermost breast. To what purpose is it that we keep anything secret from man ? nothing is shut up to God. He is amidst our minds, and comes among our most inward thoughts.” (Seneca.) Let us labour to accustom and use our spirits to subjection, to have them composed and formed to awful apprehensions of that authority and government which the Father of spirits claims, and hath established immediately over themselves. This, though it be more general, will yet reach this case.

(2.) That we aim at being, in the temper of our spirits, more indifferent about all future events, that lie within the compass of time. Let us not account them so very considerable. Time will soon be over, and is too narrow a sphere for us to confine our minds unto. We should endeavour a greater amplitude of thoughts. As he that hath large, and noble designs, looks with great indifference, upon smaller matters wherein they are not concerned. One that fears God, and works righteousness, believes a world to come, and lives in entire devotedness to the Redeemer, (the constitution of whose kingdom relates entirely to that other world) hath little cause to concern himself about interviences, which, as to his part in that world, will not alter his case. We are not the surer of heaven, if the sun shine out to-morrow ; nor the less sure, if it shine not.

For the obtaining of this dutiful and peaceful indifference, it concerns us to be much in prayer. For, both, that happy temper of mind is part of the wisdom, which if we want, we are to ask of God. (Jam. 1. 5.) and it directly eases us of the burden of our affairs to commit them in that way ; as is signified in that mentioned scripture, Phil. 4. 6. Nor was anything more agreeable, than that our Lord teaching us (in that admirable summary of petitions given in this same sermon on the mount)

to pray every day for our daily bread, should here forbid us to take thought for the morrow. As also, in the gathering of manna, no care was to be extended further than the present day.* We have easy access daily. Story tells us, the poor Chinese could not enter into the presence of their Tartarian prince, with never so just a complaint, without submitting, first, to a hundred bastinados, as the condition of their admittance. Would we thankfully accept, and use as we might, the constant liberty we have upon the easiest terms, how much would it contribute both to our innocency and quiet!

* Both which remarks are noted by some expositors.