

SERMON PREACHED ON A DAY OF PUBLIC THANKSGIVING.

But Hezekiah rendered not according to the benefit done unto him; for his heart was lifted up: therefore wrath was upon him, and upon Judah and Jerusalem.—2 CHRON. xxxii. 25.

THAT I may not detain you in a preface, let me tell you the words hold forth—

1. A sin, 'But Hezekiah rendered not according to the benefit done unto him.'

2. The proof and argument of it, 'For his heart was lifted up.'

3. The sad effects and punishment of it, both as to his own person and the people under his government.

Let me explain these branches, and then come to observe something in order to the work of the day. I know, christians, you look not for things luscious, but savoury.

1. In the sin there was a benefit done unto him, and Hezekiah's fault is that he 'rendered not accordingly.' The benefit done him implieth a complication of mercies; not only his miraculous recovery out of sickness, and fifteen years added more to his life, but also the destruction of his enemies the Assyrians; mercies which fell out near about the same time; though I dare not say, with the Jewish writers, that three days before the slaughter of the Assyrians this sickness and recovery fell out; yet certainly they were near together, as appeareth from 2 Kings xx. 6, 'And I will add unto thy days fifteen years, and I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria.' The report of which flying abroad, all the princes round about him stood in awe of him; his neighbours sent him presents; his treasures were increased; yea, nations remote, and those of no small power, as the king of Babylon, reckoned to be seven hundred miles distant from Jerusalem, sent congratulatory embassies to his court. Well, then, Hezekiah was looked upon as one highly in favour with God, honoured of men, courted on every side with costly and precious presents, and so grew full of treasure and wealth. When such strong winds fill the sails, it is hard to steer right. This was the benefit done to him; all things fell out according to his heart's desire, and concurred to the lift-

ing up his heart: 'Hezekiah rendered not according.' How can that be? He was a holy man and a thankful man. He penned a psalm of thanksgiving, and sung it yearly as a memorial of God's mercies to him: Isa. xxxviii. 9, 'The writing of Hezekiah, king of Judah, when he had been sick, and was recovered of his sickness.' God will not be complimented with. It is not words and ceremonies, formal acknowledgments and days of thanksgiving, that God standeth upon, but holy and humble carriage under mercies; and therefore Hezekiah, though he rendered somewhat to God, he 'rendered not according.' There was a defect which is here charged as his sin. He should have carried it more humbly, as holding his life and kingdom and everything of the grace of God.

2. The proof and argument. How doth it appear that he rendered not according? 'His heart was lifted up.' There is a twofold lifting up of the heart—in a way of zeal and encouragement in the Lord's ways. So it is said of Jehoshaphat, 2 Chron. xvii. 5, 6, that he had 'presents, and riches, and honours in abundance; and his heart was lifted up in the way of the Lord: moreover he took away the high places and groves out of Judah.' This is a good lifting up, when a man groweth cheerful and undaunted in the Lord's work, and therefore falleth a-reforming, whatever it cost him. He knoweth the God of his mercies will bear him out. But there is a carnal lifting up of the heart, in a way of pride and vainglory, or daring violence and oppression. Thus it is said of Amaziah, after he had smitten the Edomites, 2 Chron. xxv. 19, 'That his heart was lifted up to boast;' and this was in part Hezekiah's sin. Indeed it is not easy to state the kind of his pride.

[1.] Whether the pride of arrogancy or self-ascription, or taking God's part to himself, as if the blessings were merited by him; a disease incident to the creature when exalted: Deut. ix. 4, 'Speak not thou in thine heart after that the Lord thy God hath cast them out from before thee, saying, For my righteousness the Lord hath brought me in to possess this land;' and therefore God puts in a caution against it.

[2.] Or else conceit, musing upon and admiring his own greatness; as the king of Babylon strutteth and vaunteth, 'Is not this great Babylon, which I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?' Dan. iv. 30. Pride, of all sins, puts men upon vain musings: Luke i. 51, 'He hath scattered the proud in the imaginations of their hearts.' Proud men, of all others, are subject to imaginations, or self-admiring thoughts. His heart was too much tickled. In the story it is said, when Merodach Baladan sent letters and a present to Hezekiah, Isa. xxxix. 2, 'He was glad of them;' wherein the secret intimation of his spirit was discovered. Or else—

[3.] The pride of security or self-dependence. When we are well, God is forgotten; good men are apt to sleep upon a carnal pillow or bolster, and dream many a pleasant dream, till God taketh it away from under their heads: Ps. xxx. 6, 'And in my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved.' Carnal confidence is very natural. Or—

[4.] The pride of vainglory or ostentation. He seemeth to be tainted with a spice of that vanity by showing his treasure to the ambassadors

of the king of Babylon: 'He showed them the house of his precious things, the silver, and the gold, and the spices, and the precious ointment, and all the house of his armour, and all that was in his treasures; there was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion, that Hezekiah showed them not,' Isa. xxxix. 2. Whether one or more, or all, I will not determine; they are all branches of the same root. Certainly, vain men are apt to be puffed up in all these kinds, that have had deliverances far less strange than was this of Hezekiah.

3. Come we now to explain the punishment and sad effects of this great failing: 'Wrath was upon him, and upon Judah and Jerusalem.'

[1.] Upon his particular person, 'Wrath was upon him.' There is a near link between pride and wrath. His 'heart was lifted up,' and presently 'wrath was upon him:' Prov. xviii. 12, 'Before destruction the heart of man is haughty.' It is a sure sign of the loss of our comforts, parts, estate, children, authority, when we grow proud of them. It is a sin that God deeply detesteth, and will severely chasten it, even in his own dearest children: 'Wrath was upon him;' sentence was passed, but execution respited. All was well for the present. Wrath is said to be upon us as soon as sentence is passed. Men think not so, but God judgeth so: 'Wrath was upon him.' Doth it stay there? No.

[2.] Upon his people. It followeth, 'And upon all Judah and Jerusalem.' The whole land smarts for the sins of magistrates. *Delirant reges*, kings offend. 'Hezekiah's heart was lifted up.' *Plectuntur Achivi*, the people are punished. Judah and Jerusalem are obnoxious to the stroke of God's vengeance. But how can this stand with the Lord's justice? 'What have these sheep done?' as David said in a like case, 2 Sam. xxiv. 17. I answer—They had done enough to ruin them long since. Hezekiah's sin was not the main cause, but one great occasion of hastening the judgment. Sometimes God takes occasion to punish magistrates for the people's sin: Prov. xxviii. 2, 'For the transgression of a land many are the princes thereof.' The government is often altered, and they are tossed from hand to hand as a just punishment. At other times the people are punished for the magistrates' sins: Zech. x. 3, 'Mine anger was kindled against the shepherds, and I punished the goats.' A great oak cannot fall but all the little shrubs about it suffer loss. On the other side, when the burning beginneth at a cottage, it may increase till it come to the palace. If the dispensation seem harsh, remember that God would involve us in one another's judgments, to make us more careful of one another's duties; that when magistrates transgress, the people may mourn, and, with that modesty which will suit with the duty of their place, give warning of the danger. And magistrates may not give liberty to the wickedness of the people, lest they bring a judgment on their own heads.

I have given you some view of the words, let me come to the points.

1. That those that have received mercies must be careful to give in answerable returns, or to render according to what they have received.

2. That it is a sign we are unthankful for mercies when our hearts are lifted up under the enjoyment of mercies.

3. Pride and unthankfulness is a sad intimation of approaching wrath and destruction.

4. When a ruler's heart is lifted up, and doth not thankfully improve the mercies received from God, the whole land may smart for it.

I shall speak but to the two first of these points—

Doct. 1. That those that have received mercies must be careful to give in answerable returns, or to render according to what they have received. It was Hezekiah's sin that he did not render according.

Here I shall inquire what it is to render according to what we have received. Observe—(1.) There must be a rendering; (2.) A rendering according to the rate and kind of our receipts.

1. A rendering. There is a reflection upon God from all his works. Hell-fire casts back the reflection of the lustre of his justice and the power of his wrath. The world is round, and the motion of all things circular; they begin in God, and end in God; their being is from him, and the tendency of their motion is to him: Rom. xi. 36, 'For of him, and through him, and to him are all things.' All things do thus reflect upon God: 'The wrath of man shall praise thee,' Ps. lxxvi. 10. We should want many occasions of rejoicing in God if it were not for the wrath of man; thus God is glorified passively. All events turn to a good account; thus all creatures praise him: Ps. cxlv. 10, 'All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord;' the creatures offer matter of praise to God.

But we speak of the active rendering and returning praise to God. There are many words used in this matter. Those three which are most solemn are, praise, blessing, and thanksgiving; which last is the solemn word of the new testament, as being proper to the dispensation of it, God's benefits being now fully manifested and accomplished. There is a difference between these three terms. Praise respects God's excellency, as I may praise a man that never did me good. Blessing, God's benefits; it is an echo to him: Eph. i. 3, 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.' And thankfulness is not only declared in word, but in deed. These three should always go together. We should gather up God's excellences out of his providences, and acknowledge the mercy, and live the life of love and praise. Or, if you will, in rendering praise to God these things concur—(1.) We must be affected with the mercies; (2.) Solemnly praise God for them; (3.) Renew the remembrance of them; (4.) Improve them to some good use.

1. We must be affected with the mercy. Formal speeches are but an empty prattle, which God regardeth not. David first calleth upon his heart: Ps. ciii. 1, 'Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name.' The noblest faculties must be exercised in the noblest work. Is the soul raised into an admiration of God? church adversaries took up the customary form: Isa. lxvi. 5, 'Your brethren that hate you, that cast you out for my name's sake, said, Let the Lord be glorified.' In an instrument of music, the more the sound cometh out of the belly of it the sweeter; if we expect flame, we presuppose fire. When the heart is full of gracious affections, the tongue will be loosed to praise God: Ps. xlv. 1, 'My heart is inditing a good matter, my tongue is the pen of a ready writer.'

2. Solemn praising God for them. It is an honourable work; love

is the grace of heaven, praise the duty of heaven. There is no room for faith nor use of prayer. It is angels' work, as sin is the devil's work. It is good to be preparing for our everlasting estate. It is comely for the saints: Ps. cxlvii. 1, 'Praise the Lord, for it is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant, and praise is comely.' Usually we thrust gratulation into a narrow room: it is a stranger in our public worship. Self-love will put us upon supplication, and our wants will beget a natural fervency in prayer. We are eager to have blessings, but we forget to return to give God the glory: Hosea v. 15, 'In their affliction they will seek me early.' This is self-love, not religion. All the ten lepers could say, 'Jesus, Master, have mercy upon us,' Luke xvii. 13, but only 'one of them, when he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God,' ver. 15. Pharaoh could pray when God's hand was upon him. Oh! it is the more honourable thing to give thanks, and it is profitable: Ps. lxvii. 5, 6, 'Let the people praise thee, O God, let all the people praise thee; then shall the earth yield her increase.' There is a *κυκλογέννησις*, a circular generation, between vapours and showers. Vapours cause showers, and showers cause vapours. The course of mercy is stopped when God is not praised. Where do husbandmen bestow their seed most plentifully, but where the ground yieldeth most increase? When the land faileth year after year, men withhold their seed. God will not bury mercies in the grave of unthankfulness. It is a due to God; it is his bargain with us: Ps. l. 15, 'Call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.' He expects it as the return of all his mercies. Glory and praise are the revenues of the crown of heaven, the rent reserved to God. We have the comfort and use, God will have the glory and praise. We promised it to him: Ps. li. 15, 'O Lord, open thou my lips, and my mouth shall show forth thy praise.' Want of mercies maketh us prize them. If we would look upon the vows of our affliction, we should find cause to value our enjoyments. It is our privilege, as men, that we have a tongue to bless God: James iii. 9, 'Therewith bless we God, even the Father.' Therefore our tongue is called our glory: Ps. cviii. 1, 'I will sing and give praise, even with my glory.' Beasts have no reason, angels no tongue. Praise is necessary to give vent to our affections, yea, to increase them. Fire warmeth the hearth, and then the warmth of the hearth doth preserve the fire. Praise is necessary to convey our affections to others, as one bird may set the whole flight on chirping.

3. Renewing the remembrance of them: Ps. cxi. 4, 'He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered; the Lord is gracious and full of compassion.' Great deliverances are things not to be once mentioned, and no more, whilst the experience is warm upon our hearts; when the act is over, we should be remembering again and again.

4. The mercies must be improved to a greater trust in God, and love and fear of God, and obedience to him.

[1.] Trust. The more we know of his name, the more should we trust him: Ps. lxiv. 10, 'The righteous shall be glad in the Lord, and shall trust in him.' That is true praise and thanksgiving that endeth in trust. It is the purest respect of the creature, and that which keepeth up a respect between God and us; faith is the best thanks.

I doubt we are not spiritual enough in our returns to God. We content ourselves with verbal praises, and do not look after the growth of faith and trust: 2 Cor. i. 10, 'Who delivered us from so great a danger, and doth deliver; in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us.' He findeth it growing upon him whilst he was mentioning of it. Every experience we have is a condescension in God towards the strengthening of our faith.

[2.] Love; it is a special part of this rendering. God will be loved again where he loveth first. *Radius reflexus languet.* The cold wall will reverberate and beat back the sunbeams; a little water put into a pump fetches up more: Ps. cxvi. 1, 2, 'I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice and my supplication; because he hath inclined his ear to me, therefore I will call upon him as long as I live.' God is more endeared to us. Love him as thy Father in Christ. Every mercy cometh wrapped in his bowels to the saints, and swimming in his blood. When Moses had received mercies, Deut. x. 12, 'Now,' saith he, 'what doth the Lord require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, and to walk in his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul?' We have a good master, and love is one chief part of our work. We were bound to love him if he had never done us good, much more when he is so gracious. It is the end of all common mercies: Deut. xxx. 20, 'That thou mayest love the Lord thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him, for he is thy life, and the length of thy days.'

[3.] Fear, that we dare not offend so good a God. That is a true improvement: Hosea iii. 5, 'Afterwards shall the children of Israel return and seek the Lord their God, and David their king, and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days.' When we grow more presumptuous because we are well at ease, that is naught; but when it increaseth our reverence of God, and holy fear and trembling, then it works kindly. You that have been conscious to the terrible things of righteousness which God hath executed in the high places of the field, you should fear, love, and trust him more than others. You see what a great God he is, that he will find out those that hate him. How suddenly can he blast worldly confidence, however supported! and how able is he to protect those that trust in him! Will you offend such a God? These changes do not only speak duty to the enemies, but to you. Habakkuk trembled at the thought of God's judgments on Babylon: Hab. iii. 16, 'When I heard, my belly trembled, my lips quivered at the voice;' and David: Ps. cxix. 120, 'My flesh trembleth for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy judgments.' It is an appearance of God, and tender hearts melt at it, as a lion trembleth to see a dog beaten. Tender hearts are affected with the wrath that lighteth upon others, especially when they are the instruments.

[4.] Obedience. You should walk the more humbly and strictly with God. David was at a loss: 'What shall I render?' This was one of his resolutions: Ps. cxvi. 9, 'I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living.' This is your duty, to bind yourselves to a more humble and holy walking with God. This is a good use of experiences. The army that have seen so much of God should be a school of piety to

the nation. There is a notable place: Judges ii. 7, 'And the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the Lord that he did for Israel.' Whilst there were any to keep alive the memorial of such experiences, what an awe was it upon their hearts! Oh! that you could get your hearts in such a frame. Methinks you should have such arguings as this: Shall I, that have seen the wonders of the Lord, be proud, vain, carnal, contemptuous of holy things? Such holy reasonings argue a good frame: Ezra ix. 13, 'Seeing that thou our God hast given us such deliverance as this, should we again break thy commandments?' Certainly none sin so dearly, and with so much expense, as a people saved by the Lord's mercies.

II. To render accordingly, What is that? It implieth two things—

1. Real mercies require real acknowledgments. When your lives were in jeopardy in the high places of the field, did God compliment with you, or save in jest? And now, in the day of your thanksgivings, will you compliment with God, and put him off with a little bodily presence? What is a little cold thanks if you be proud and injurious, and despisers of the ministry, regardless of God's institutions, cavilling at his ordinances, neglectful of church-communion, a thing grown into fashion with many; they content themselves with a loose profession of Christ, living out of the communion of any particular church; a sad thing! God would have coals lie together. Wine is best preserved in the hogshead, and saints in communion. Did God take their thanks well that would own a mercy but oppress the people? Zech. xi. 5, 'Whose possessors slay them, and hold themselves not guilty, and they that sell them say, Blessed be God, I am rich.' They were grown great and high, and God must have the glory by all means; but they used the people severely at their own pleasure. There was a thanksgiving, but withal there was disobedience and abuse of authority; and in that case keeping a day will be to no purpose. The devil's leading Christ to the top of the pinnacle was but to persuade him to cast himself down again.

2. The acknowledgment must answer the proportion of the mercy, be it in word or deed. It is true we cannot vie with God for degree and measure, but we must do what we can.

[1.] If the acknowledgment be in word: Ps. cxlv. 3, 'Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised;' it must be taken notice of in a more than ordinary manner. The more of God is manifest, the more it should be taken notice of: Ps. cl. 2, 'Praise him according to his excellent greatness.' According to the great appearances and manifestations of God so must our praises be: 'Let the high praises of God be in their mouth,' Ps. cxlix. 6. There are higher and lower praises, more and less solemn according to the proportion and size of our mercies. The spouse's eyes were as 'dove's eyes,' Cant. iv. 1, to peck and look upward.

[2.] If in deed, some notable thing must be done for God. When Ahasuerus had heard of a good deed done by Mordecai, he saith, What honour and dignity hath been done to Mordecai for this? Esther vi.

3. So, what honour hath been done to the Lord? What have we

done for him? Saith David, 2 Sam. vii. 2, 'I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains.' The Lord hath advanced me from a sheep-hook to a sceptre; what love have I showed to God? what excellent thing have I done for God? wherein am I carried out with zeal for God?

Use. To reprove—

1. Those that, instead of rendering according, render the quite contrary, who, the more God hath blessed them, grow unthankful, proud, sensual, dead, formal in prayer, less in communion with God, more licentious in their actions. They are like tops, never well but when they are scourged; abuse their mercies to the contempt of God, as the Israelites took the earrings of gold and silver, which were the spoils of the Egyptians, and made a golden calf of them. As the sea turneth all the sweet dews and influences of heaven into salt water, so they turn all their mercies into occasions of sin.

2. Those that do not render aught at all. They are crying for mercy, but think not of returning thanks to God, but, when they have what they would have, turn the back upon God, not the face: Jer. ii. 27, 'In the time of their trouble they will say, Arise and save us;' then their face is to God. There was a law in Ezekiel xlvi. 9, 'He that entereth in by the way of the north gate to worship shall go out by way of the south gate,' &c. He that went in at one gate was not to go out at the same gate, but an opposite; some say, lest he should turn his back upon the mercy-seat.

3. Those that render something, but not suitable. If you would render according, you must be in a capacity. Under the law, the peace-offering was brought at the top of a burnt-offering, Lev. iii. 3. We must be first reconciled to God before we can do anything acceptable. Awaken the heart to the work. David awakens his soul: Ps. ciii. 1, 'Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name.' Search out the works of God: Ps. cxl. 2, 'The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure in them.' Consider what the world gaineth by every discovery of God, what attributes of God are manifested, what promises are accomplished, how church hopes thrive. Desire God to give you the heart to render, that he that gave the occasion would give the disposition: Ps. li. 15, 'Lord, open thou my lips, and my mouth shall show forth thy praise.' We are spiritually dumb and tongue-tied. Reason and argue from your experiences to your duty: Ezra ix. 13, 'Seeing thou hast given us such a deliverance as this, shall we again break thy commandments?' When you have done all, you will be at a loss: Ps. cxvi. 12, 'What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits towards me?' He that hath a right sense of God's mercies will be forced to say so; and therefore be striving more and more.

Doct. 2. That it is a sign we are unthankful under mercies when the heart is lifted up upon the enjoyment of them. The Spirit of God bringeth this as the evidence against Hezekiah.

Reasons of the point.

1. Because God can never be rightly praised and exalted while the heart is proud: Isa. ii. 17, 'And the loftiness of men shall be made low, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day.' God is exalted in

the creatures' self-abasement; as two buckets in a well, when one goeth down, the other cometh up. The ark and dagon cannot stand together, 1 Sam. v. 3. Set up the ark, and dagon must come upon his face. If you would have God exalted in the riches of his grace, you must lie in the dust.

2. A proud, lifted-up heart cannot be rightly conversant about blessings. It doth not give them their due rise, nor their due value, nor their due end.

[1.] Not their due rise. Many will say God did it. 'God, I thank thee,' was in the pharisee's mouth, Luke xviii. 11; but they do not stand wondering why God should do it; as David: 2 Sam. vii. 18, 'Who am I, O Lord God? and what is my father's house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?' that God should look upon a worm, whence is it? what did God see in me? They actually disclaim all respect, and worth, and merit in themselves, that praise God aright.

[2.] A proud heart doth not give blessings their due value. He looketh for more still, he entertaineth crosses with murmuring, and blessings with disdain. It is but thus and thus, and still set God a new task to do: Ps. lxxviii. 20, 'Behold he smote the rock, and the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed; can he give bread also? can he provide flesh for his people?' They slight what is past if they have not what they look for: 'All this availeth me nothing, as long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate,' Esther v. 13; Mal. i. 2, 'I have loved you, saith the Lord; yet they say, Wherein hast thou loved us?' Where are all those mercies and glorious experiences? It is all forgotten and undervalued. If the mercies fit not our mould, all is nothing.

[3.] It doth not give blessings their due ends. God giveth us mercies that we might be more holy and humble, and pride maketh us more carnal and insolent and secure; and so we feed our lusts of the Lord's provision. He gives mercies that 'we may be lifted up in his ways,' 2 Chron. xvii. 6, that we might promote his interest the more cheerfully, without baseness, fear, or carnal respects. But pride abuseth it to carelessness, contempt of holy things, insultation over those that are fallen under God's hand: Deut. xxxii. 15, 'Jeshurun waxed wanton and kicked.' They despise the ordinances of God, and dispute away duties, and cavil at religion. Is this the fruit of our deliverances?

How shall we know when the heart is lifted up? Pride is a capacious sin, therefore called 'pride of life,' 1 John ii. 16, because it is a sin that diffuseth itself throughout all affairs and conditions of life, children, estate, beauty, strength, parts, honours, graces. A worm may breed in manna. Paul was puffed up: 2 Cor. xii. 7, 'Lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.' But the text speaketh of a pride after deliverances, which is a self-blessing and self-depending confidence; which is mainly shown—(1.) In security; (2.) In insolency.

(1.) In security. Men live as if they were above changes. God is neglected, or but coldly owned, as if now we had no more need of him: Lam. i. 9, 'She remembered not her last end, therefore she came down

wonderfully ;' that is, she was not mindful of the changes and mutations to which all things are obnoxious. Men usually lose their sense of duty with their fears. The heart groweth flat and dead in prayer, not carried out with such zeal and earnestness as when we were in distress. Or it takes us off from what we proposed in our affliction, and all our vows and promises are forgotten.

(2.) In insolency. This is manifested—

(1st) By contention. When we are delivered, then we revive the old quarrels ; as timber warpeth in the sunshine. When God giveth us success, then follow divisions. The greatest strife is in dividing the spoil : 'Only by pride cometh contention,' saith Solomon, Prov. xiii. 10. Plenty and ease begetteth pride. Dioclesian's persecution was brought on by the factious carriage of the christians themselves, contending for the honours of the church. In king Edward's days, when there was a little breathing, then was there a contention for ceremonies.

(2d) By insultation over enemies. True they are under, but it is unmanly to speak to the grief of those whom God hath wounded. If our mercies cannot be advanced but by the fall of our brethren, let us not insult, but pity them. David grieved when Saul fell, and fasted for his enemies. Those whom the hand of the Lord hath touched have a kind of reverence due to them ; as places blasted with thunder and lightning were accounted sacred Judges xxi. 6, 'And the children of Israel repented them for Benjamin their brother.'

(3d) By oppression and violence : 'Because it is in the power of their hands,' Micah ii. 1. Power doth mightily draw forth corruption. Tenderness of conscience should be a restraint where public force is not. This I can do, but I dare not. But when men employ their power for hurt, not for good, and think to be borne out in a sinful course by their strength and power, it is pride and carnal confidence.

Use. O christians ! beware of being lifted up in any kind.

1. Take heed of secret thoughts of merit : Deut. ix. 4, 'Speak not thou in thine heart after that the Lord thy God hath cast them out from before thee, saying, For my righteousness the Lord hath brought me in to possess this land.' Though there be not such formal thoughts or downright expressions, yet this is the implied thought. There are explicit thoughts and implicit thoughts ; the one is actually and sensibly conceived in the mind, the other lurk and lie hid there, and our actions being interpreted, are necessarily resolved into such thoughts. As when you are scornful and pitiless, vaunting yourselves above others, and do not actually admire the riches of the Lord's goodness, surely there is some latent thought of merit in the heart. You may take notice of God's justice, but still you must admire free grace.

2. Take heed of ascribing to your wisdom, power, and conduct. Man would fain be *faber fortune sue*, the author of his own happiness, jostling God out of his thoughts : Hab. i. 16, 'They sacrifice to their net, and burn incense to their drag, because by them their portion is fat and their meat plenteous ;' insulting and glorying in their wisdom and strength. Though a man doth not fall down as a gross idolater, and perform rites of devotion, yet his thoughts run this way, and so God is laid aside. God giveth his people warning of this : Deut. viii. 14, 'Let not thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the Lord thy

God which brought thee out of the land of Egypt ;' and ver. 17, ' And thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of my hand hath gotten this wealth.' Why should the Lord give so many warnings if we were not exceeding prone to this? We should throw our crowns at God's feet. It is enough for us to be poor instruments in God's hand. I hope you came here before the Lord with such a design this day, to strip yourselves, and give all the glory to God.

3. Take heed of the pride of self-dependence. Hereby the heart is taken off from God, and then the devil hath us upon the hip. He that swimmeth in a full stream is apt to be carried away with the stream. It is a hard matter to see the nothingness of the creature when we enjoy the fulness of the creature. Man's thoughts are always swallowed up with his present condition. In misery we think we shall never come out of it; in prosperity, that it will never be otherwise. Paul could say, ' As having nothing, yet possessing all things,' 2 Cor. vi. 10. Few can say, As possessing all things and having nothing, so as to sit loose from our worldly dependences: ' I have learned to abound ;' it is an harder lesson than ' I have learned to be abased,' Phil. iv. 12, as there is more of choice in it, and less of necessity. We are beaten to the other. We use to say, Such a one would do well to be a lord or a lady. It is an harder matter than you are aware of. Many have done well in a low condition that could not manage an higher. ' Ephraim is a cake not turned,' Hosea vii. 8; not baked of both sides, so as to walk with an holy equality and evenness of spirit in all conditions. You think it is hard to bear miseries; it is as hard to master comforts, to carry a full cup without spilling, and to keep from surfeiting at a rich and luscious banquet. Few know how to abound.

To prick these windy bladders in solemn remembrances of mercy, such things as these are necessary.

[1.] A special recognition and recalling of sins is not unseasonable. Let the warm sun melt you: Ezek. xxxvi. 30, 31, ' I will multiply the fruit of the tree, and the increase of the field, that ye shall receive no more reproach of famine among the heathen; then shall ye remember your ways and doings that have not been good, and shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for all your iniquities.' When mercies humble us and set us a-mourning, it is a kindly work. Moses bowed himself when the Lord proclaimed the name of his mercy. Oh! bow yourselves; poor worthless creatures, that God should look upon us!

[2.] Meditate upon the changes of providence. Things are at a great uncertainty in the world. Hezekiah is delivered and then falls sick; he is delivered again, and then groweth proud; and then came wrath upon him, and upon all Judah and Jerusalem: Ps. xxxix. 5, ' Verily every man at his best estate is altogether vanity; ' not only in his worst, but at his best estate; when he is in his zenith, then he is at the vertical point. Verily this is a truth should be stamped deeply upon all our hearts. Belisarius, a famous general to-day, and within a little while forced to beg for a halfpenny. Things and persons are as the spokes of a wheel, sometimes in the dirt, and sometimes out. The church complaineth, Ps. cii. 10, ' Thou hast lifted me up and cast me down; ' a sad dejection after some comfortable elevation. All outward glory is like a glass, transparent, but brittle. Paul was rapt in the third

heaven, and was full of unspeakable ravishments and revelations, yet presently he talketh of a thorn in the flesh. Now, at your best think of this, that you may inure your thoughts to changes, and settle your solid happiness in God. David, when he had a glorious victory, speaketh of losing, and God's blasting their armies, Ps. lx. 10, compared with the title; he acknowledgeth past judgments as the fruit of God's displeasure. In the Roman triumphs there was one to remember them of their mortality in the midst of their pomp. Yea, under the law leavened cakes were allowed in peace-offerings and sacrifices of thanksgiving, which were forbidden in other sacrifices: Lev. vii. 13, 'He shall offer for his offering leavened bread with the sacrifice of thanksgiving of his peace-offerings,' to teach us to temper our joys with the thought of sorrow and affliction.
