

SERMON UPON PSALM XCI. 1.

He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide in the shadow of the Almighty.—Ps. xci. 1.

THIS psalm is thought to be composed upon occasion of that great pestilence which destroyed seventy thousand in the space of three days, 2 Sam. xxiv. Whether David is the author of it is disputed; for though some of the Greek and Latin copies have a title ascribing it to David, yet the Hebrew has none. I should think it is not David's.

1. For David's psalms usually have his name prefixed, together with the occasion; which, the case being so weighty, probably here it would not have been omitted.

2. It is not likely that David, having drawn that great calamity on the people by his sin, and expressing his resentment of it with so much penitence, would make no mention of it in the contexture of this psalm, nor signify his repentance by some passage or other.

It is more likely to be composed by Gad, a prophet of those times, called David's seer, and whose ministry God made use of to offer David his choice of pestilence, war, or famine. It is probable that holy man, being no way accessory to David's sin, declareth his confidence and trust in God, for an example to other believers in like dangers. He maketh no mention of David's sin, it being both needless and undutiful to discover the nakedness of his prince, who had already manifested such an exemplary repentance. But whoever was the penman, the devil himself grants it to be the word of God, for he quotes a passage out of it: Mat. iv. 6, 'It is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee.'

In this verse (which is the ground of the whole psalm) there is—(1.) A qualification; (2.) A privilege.

Both are almost expressed in the same terms, to show that our privilege and our duty are near of kin. God is wont to reward grace with grace: Ps. xxxi. 24, 'Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart;' and Ps. xxvii. 14, 'Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart.' So delight with delight: Isa. lviii. 13, 14, 'If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day, and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable, and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord,' &c. But here it is the duty and

the fruit. What do you desire in the time of danger but to abide in the shadow of the Almighty? Do so, and you shall abide. Make him your refuge, and he will be your refuge. Dwell in God, and you shall dwell in God.

But though the qualification and privilege be expressed in like terms, yet they are not altogether the same; but as in the qualification you may observe three things, so the privilege answereth it—(1.) The act of faith; (2.) The manner of preservation; (3.) The author, or person trusted.

1. The act of faith, 'He that dwelleth;' in the privilege, 'shall abide.' He that doth dwell shall dwell.

2. The manner of preservation. It is called in the qualification, 'The secret place of the Most High;' in the privilege, 'The shadow.' The secret place: Sept.—*ἐν βοηθείᾳ τοῦ ὑψίστου*, 'He that dwells in the help of God.' God's help is secret, unknown, and unaccessible to the carnal world, who live by sense. The other term, 'shadow,' signifieth defence; for a cool shade was a great relief to travellers in that hot country: Num. xiv. 9, 'Their defence is parted from them;' margin, 'Their shadow is departed from them.' Here the Sept. *ἐν σκέπη*, 'In the protection.' The Chaldee addeth, 'In the shadow of the clouds of the glory of the Almighty.'

3. The author, or person trusted for preservation. In the qualification, 'Most High;' in the privilege, 'Almighty.' The one noteth his supreme authority and command, the other his invincible power.

Doct. That whosoever will trust himself in God's hands may remain secure under his protection in the midst of all dangers.

The point will be best discussed by considering these things—(1.) What it is to trust ourselves in God's hands; (2.) How it is expressed and recommended to us in this text; (3.) How necessary a duty this is for all christians.

I. What it is entirely to trust ourselves in God's hands. We shall consider the nature and the grounds of it.

1. The formality, nature, or essence of it consists in two acts—in resigning ourselves to God's will, and in resting with quietness, and depending upon him for the good we stand in need of. It is expressed in scripture by two words—(1.) Consecrating; and (2.) Committing ourselves to God.

[1.] Consecrating, or devoting or giving up ourselves to his will: Rom. xii. 1, 'I beseech you by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God.' There is a twofold will of God—his governing and his disposing will. We give up ourselves to obey his governing will as our ruler: Rom. vi. 13, 'Yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.' We give up ourselves to submit to his disposing will as our owner: 2 Sam. xv. 26, 'Behold, here I am, let him do unto me as seemeth good unto him.' The one, to do what he will have us to do; the other, to be what he will have us to be. Both are presupposed in trust, which resulteth from owning God as our God: Ps. xxxi. 14, 'I trusted in thee, O Lord; I said, Thou art my God.' Till we have given up ourselves to him, how can we trust him? And till we give up ourselves entirely

to him, to be governed and disposed of by him at his pleasure, we do not trust him. Therefore this is included in the fundamental article of the covenant, in the choice of God as our God. And so Ruth's conversion to the God of Israel is expressed: Ruth ii. 12, 'A full reward be given thee of the God of Israel under whose wings thou art come to trust;' that is, to whom thou hast given up thyself, whatever befall thee. She left her own people to obey his will and trust his providence.

[2.] The other word is committing ourselves to him; a notion often used, and of great significancy in this matter: as, 2 Tim. i. 12, 'For I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day;' 1 Peter iv. 19, 'Wherefore, let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well-doing, as unto a faithful creator;' and Ps. xxxvii. 5, 'Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust in him, and he shall bring it to pass.' This is when the soul rests quietly in God by faith, as a man doth in his habitation, and we can go on cheerfully in the duties of our general or particular calling, knowing that while we are in God's hands we are in safe hands, come what will come. We are not troubled about any event, but entirely commit it to God.

2. The grounds of this trust are two—(1.) God's nature; (2.) His covenant. His nature showeth his all-sufficiency; his covenant assureth us of his readiness to help us.

[1.] His nature is a ground of trust; for God is represented to us as an infinite, eternal being, wise, powerful, and good. As he is infinitely wise, so he knoweth all things, what may hurt and what may help us: Mat. vi. 32, 'Your heavenly Father knoweth that you have need of all these things;' 'And he knoweth how to deliver the righteous out of temptation,' 2 Peter ii. 9. And then he is powerful, or able, whatever difficulties arise: 2 Tim. i. 12, 'I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him unto that day;' Rom. iv. 21, 'Being fully persuaded, that what he had promised he was able also to perform.' So he is good: Ps. cxix. 68, 'Thou art good, and doest good.' So Ps. c. 5, 'The Lord is good, his mercy is everlasting, and his truth endures to all generations.' Now it is not enough that there be *notitia*, a knowledge with assent, but there must be *fiducia*, a reliance or dependence upon these things, on the infinite wisdom, power, and goodness of God, that he will to us show himself a God wise, good, and powerful, as he doth to all his creatures.

[2.] His covenant or promise is a ground of trust; for God's promises are the sacred bands which he hath put upon himself, the rule and warrant of our faith, and the great encouragement of it. As it is said of Sarah, that 'she judged him faithful that had promised,' Heb. xi. 11. Surely God will make good his word. Believers may be confident of it, though the event be never so unlikely: Ps. lvi. 4, 'In God I will praise his word, in God have I put my trust, I will not fear what flesh can do unto me.' When we have God's word, it is enough for the triumph of faith, though the dispensations of his providence little answer our expectations. Only here lieth a difficulty; certain it

is that God's nature and his word both together are a foundation of trust; and when his wisdom, power, and goodness is at the bottom of the covenant, it is made thereby more firm and valid to us; for our general security lieth in the nature of God as the particular warrant of our faith in his promise. But when these two are severed, when we have no particular express promise, how far may we depend upon his nature? I answer—

(1.) Consider what trust is. Not a confidence of particular events, but a resigning and committing ourselves to God. Then you will see that his nature relieveth very much, though we have no express promise. Surely a powerful God can do all things that we expect from him. He can keep and preserve us when all means fail. A wise God knoweth what is best for us, and a good God will not forsake his children or people.

(2.) We have general promises when we have not particular; as Heb. xii. 5; that God will not utterly forsake us; that he will not leave us to insupportable difficulties: 1 Cor. x. 13, 'God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able: but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it;' that 'all things shall work for good,' Rom. viii. 28. But for disposing the particular event; on the one hand, God is so wise and good that we need not disquiet ourselves about it; but on the other, we must not make promises to ourselves, nor become false prophets to ourselves, nor entertain a confidence of particular events without God's express warrant.

(3.) We may lawfully hope for good success though there be no promise, if there be nothing to the contrary; because God is so ready to do good to all his creatures, especially to his people and faithful servants, when in their distress they seek to him and humbly wait upon him. Surely we ought not to be faithless and distrustful in particular exigencies. There is a common bounty and goodness of God which is over all his works: Ps. cxlv. 9, 'The Lord is good to all; his tender mercy is over all his works. This reacheth to the preservation of the smallest worm, decketh the lilies, feedeth the ravens and fowls of the air; therefore certainly more noble creatures, such as man is, may expect their share in this common bounty. How much more may God's people and children? See Mat. vi. 25, &c., 'Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on: is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air; for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?' Will he not give to children that which he giveth to beasts, to fowls of the air, to enemies? You would count him an unnatural father which would feed his dogs and hawks, and let his children die of hunger.

(4.) In case the scruple be whether any promise belong to us, see the parables: Luke xi. 8-13, 'I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him because he is his friend; yet because of his importunity, he will rise, and give him as many as he needeth. And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it

shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh, receiveth,' &c. ; Luke xviii. 7, 8, 'And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily.' Thus we should raise ourselves into a confidence and comfortable expectation in waiting on this good God.

II. Let us see how it is expressed and recommended to us in this text. Here is the person trusting, the act, the encouragement to trust.

1. The person trusting is indefinitely expressed, 'He that dwelleth,' &c. And the indefinite expression in the case is equivalent to an universal inviting all. There is no exception against any because of their outward condition. 'He,' whatsoever he be, high or low, rich or poor; for God is no acceptor of persons, but is rich to all that call upon him. Among men it is otherwise; the poor, who most need cherishing and protection, have least share of it. Men barter with their kindness, and give harbour and entertainment to them from whom they may receive it again. It is the fashion of the world to respect great ones. If a rich or noble man should invite himself to our houses, we take it for a great favour, and strain ourselves to give them suitable entertainment; the more free they are to take any part of the provision made for them, the more we thank them, as if obliged by a new benefit; which liberty, if a poor man should take, we should look upon it as a bold intrusion. It is the rich are respected, the rich are entertained in the world, whose causes and suits are despatched, when the poor can hardly get access and audience. As all floods run to the sea, so do the respects of the world to the rich and mighty. But this is a general and common promise, which excludeth no sorts of men. Here is no distinction of high and low, prince and subjects, nobles and common people; whosoever come to seek an hiding-place in God are welcome, if they come in faith. He doth not say, 'The prince or potentate that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High, &c., lest he should exclude meaner people; nor doth he say, 'Only the poor and destitute that dwell, &c., lest the trust of princes and persons of better condition should be cut off. No; the bosom of God's providence is open to receive persons of all sorts, ages, sexes, degrees, and state of life. He is present with all, provideth for all, protects all, supplieth all that flee to him in their tribulation: Ps. xxxiv. 6, 'This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him.' Not the mighty prince or eminent saint. Prayers in cottages are as acceptable to him as prayers in palaces.

2. The act, 'He dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High.' He that expecteth the protection of the Almighty must be a person qualified for that protection; he must be one that dwelleth in God; such as are reconciled to him by Christ Jesus, such as have taken God for their God, such as fear him, and have chosen him for their portion, and are resolved with an upright heart to obey him; these are the objects of God's protection, blessing, and defence: Ps. lxxxiv. 11, 'The Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.' The Lord complaineth of some that would lean upon him and yet continue in their sins: Micah iii. 11, 'The heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money:

yet will they lean upon the Lord, and say, Is not the Lord among us? none evil can come upon us.' Such God will cast off, as Paul cast off the viper that fastened upon his hand. These sleep too securely already in their sins, and God never intended to provide a pillow for them in his promises. These God meaneth to punish, not protect. These rather build castles in the air than dwell in the secret place of the Most High.

More particularly, this dwelling in God—

[1.] Noteth trust, or making God our refuge, in whom alone we seek safety, comfort, and defence. In a time of danger men seek out for a secure dwelling and safe place of retreat: Prov. xviii. 10, 11, 'The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous fleeth to it, and is safe. The rich man's wealth is his strong city, and an high wall in his own conceit.' What wealth is to another, that the name of the Lord is to the righteous person; he hath no dependence but on God, from whom he expecteth safety and supply. Whither doth a man retreat from the storm, but to his house? There he seeketh shelter, and there he enjoyeth all his comforts. So doth a believer in God; there is his protection and consolation. We have a sure dwelling in reality, they in conceit.

[2.] It noteth a constant intimacy or continual trust. We do not call our tarrying in an inn for a night our dwelling, nor running to a tree or shelter in a storm, with a mind to depart thence as soon as it ceaseth. Many run to him in their distresses. No; the secret of the Most High must be our dwelling-place, or the place of our constant residence. The expression intendeth such as live in an holy familiarity with God, and have constant recourse to him: Job xxii. 21, 'Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace.' Most men make use of God in their straits, when they are beaten to him, and have no other place of retreat. No; it is meant of such a trust as puts us upon a constant communion with God, or an habitual converse with him, not by fits. In this Ps. xci. 9, 'Thou shalt make the Most High thy refuge, and my God thine habitation.' God cannot be well our refuge unless he be also our habitation. A refuge is a place of retreat and safety in a time of war, and an habitation is the place of our residence and abode in a time of peace. So that whatsoever our condition be, our dependence must be still on God. When things are prosperous, he must be owned as the fountain of our blessings, and all our comforts taken immediately out of his hand, acknowledging that we hold all by his mercy and bountiful providence. If we consider our forfeiture by sin, the uncertainty of these outward comforts, and the continual necessity of God's providential influence, and how apt the heart is to be enticed from God by carnal confidence, we shall soon find that trust is as necessary in prosperity as adversity. Then in adversity no man can withdraw himself from God; therefore it is best dwelling in him. *Qui a te fugit, quo fugit, nisi a te placato, ad te iratum?* He doth but forsake him as a friend to find him as an enemy. There is no way to avoid his justice but by flying to his mercy. We may escape the wrath of earthly kings and potentates; their eyes cannot see all, nor their hands reach all; but who can lie hid from him that filleth heaven and earth, that he should not see him and find him out? Jer. xxiii. 24, 'Can any hide himself in secret places, that I shall not see him, saith the Lord? Do not I

fill heaven and earth, saith the Lord? Our sins cannot be hidden from his sight, nor our persons from his punishment. There can be no hiding-place without God, nor hiding-place against God. None can hide himself from him, but in him. Mercy receiveth those whom justice threateneth.

3. The encouragements to this trust. They are three—

[1.] The titles and attributes given to God, 'Most High,' and 'Almighty.'

(1.) The first is 'Most High.' There are many names given to God in scripture, but this is most proper to the case in hand; for all our enemies and dangers are something under God, and at his disposal. Whether they be men or devils, they are not exempted from the dominion and government of God's providence. If you be in their hand, they are in God's hands, and can do no more than he pleaseth. Devils are spiritual wickednesses in high places; they are high, but God is Most High. So when men oppress others by their power: Eccles. v. 8, 'He that is higher than the highest regardeth, and there be higher than they.' Nothing on this side heaven should be feared by a believer; for the Lord in whom he trusts, 'is high above all,' Ps. cxiii. 4. Could we dwell more above with God, how would both the splendour and terror of all worldly glory be lessened in our eyes; how soon and easily should we despise this little ant-hill of the world, where poor worms creep up and down, and make a great deal of pudder about a thing of nought!

(2.) The other title is 'Almighty.' We need not warp, nor shrink, nor shift: Gen. xvii. 1, 'I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be thou perfect.' He is able to keep off danger, to give us all manner of happiness. You have his promise who hath power and dominion over all things in the world; and if omnipotency shall be employed for your comfort and protection, why should you be disquieted? His power is above all power, and his wisdom above all wisdom, and his love will never fail. He can destroy what resists his will; for he that made all things out of nothing can easily turn them into their original nothing again. If we can do nothing for our own relief, he can do all things; one beck of his will is enough to make a world; he can speak creatures into being or nothing at his pleasure.

[2.] The expressions that set forth the manner of this help. They are two—'The secret of the Most High,' and 'The shadow of the Almighty.'

(1.) The first word, 'The secret,' hath various acceptations. Sometimes it is put for the knowledge of God's will: Ps. xxv. 14, 'The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him;' and Prov. iii. 32, 'His secret is with the righteous.' Sometimes it is put for his gracious protection: Job xxix. 4, 'The secret of the Lord was upon my tabernacle.' So Ps. xxxi. 20, 'Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man.' By it is meant that special favour of God which the world knoweth not, or his providence, that protecteth his people and keepeth them safe, though they have nothing to trust to. As there is a secret curse, that, like a moth, eateth out all the enjoyments of the wicked, so there is a secret and insensible blessing that maketh godly men to prosper in the midst of all difficulties. This secret preservation is not discerned by carnal men; they are kept, and

none knoweth how, when, to appearance, they are not only laid in common with others, but exposed to the rage of others. Well, then, God's power, wisdom, and goodness, whereon faith doth fix itself, is a riddle and mystery to the world, which carnal reason knoweth not how to improve to any satisfaction and comfort. However, it teacheth us to depend upon the providence of God, whether there be any appearance of the benefit we look for, yea or no. If the name of the Lord be a strong tower, it is an invisible tower, only found out by faith and entered into by faith. Therefore he that would take up his dwelling-place in God must not go altogether by probabilities of sense, but govern himself by grounds and reasons of faith.

(2.) The other notion is, 'The shadow of the Almighty.' Shadow is defence, as we said before. Yea, not only defence and safety is implied in it, but that sweet refreshing of mind which they find who repose themselves under the protection of God; as it is a mighty comfort to men when they come out of the scorching heat of the sun into some shady place: Ps. lvii. 1, 'Under the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast.' So Ps. xxxvi. 8, and in many other places. The allusion to chickens shrouding themselves under the dam's wing, or the outstretched wings of cherubims, &c., or else to the shadow of a tree, as Cant. ii. 3. Thus Jonah was mightily refreshed with the shadow of his gourd; and you know how passionate he was when it was blasted, see Jonah iv. 8, 9. But this is another manner of shadow. Earthly shadows may be blasted, but this is always fresh and green; here we may abide, and have many cool refreshings. There is no danger of the withering of our shadow, or our being thrust out.

[3.] It is given out as a promise, 'He that dwelleth shall abide;' which implieth two things—(1.) Leave to dwell in God; (2.) Assurance of safety and comfort.

(1.) Leave to dwell in God. There is an entrance for and admission of poor penitent believers. The throne of grace or mercy-seat standeth always open in the times of the gospel: Heb. iv. 16, 'Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.' None are rejected that come in faith, and seek all their hope and comfort in God through Christ. When times are uncertain, and we know not the bottom of the dangers that compass us about, is it not a great comfort to have a hiding-place, where we may remain secure and without fear? And is any place more secure than the heart of God? Evil may come at us in other places, but there we are safe day and night. Now we may have a room in the heart of God if we will but enter into his peace, and seek our reconciliation by Christ Jesus: 'He that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out,' John vi. 37.

(2.) It implieth assurance of safety and comfort: 'He shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.' We have here his word to build upon: Ps. lxii. 5, 6, 'My soul, wait thou only upon God, for my expectation is from him. He is only my rock, and my salvation, and my defence; I shall not be moved.' What should harm you when God taketh you into his protection, in whose hands are all persons and things? If he be made a friend, and his power and love engaged for

us, your souls may dwell in full ease and content: Ps. v. 3, 'I laid me down and slept, for the Lord sustained me.' So Ps. iv. 8, 'I will lay me down and sleep, for thou only makest me dwell in safety.' There is ground of confidence that God is our preserver. Never shall we be free from vexing, tormenting cares and fears till we can thus dwell in God, and build all our hopes upon his truth, love, and power. A child of God is not stupid and foolhardy; he hath as tender a sense of his natural interests as others have; he doth often think of the vanity and uncertainty of all earthly things; he has a greater reverence for all events of providence, as he eyeth God in them; yet none are less discomposed, whatever falleth out in the world, because they trust God, and can cast themselves into the arms of his providence, and depend upon his love and promise, even then when he seemeth to be an enemy to them. They have resigned themselves to God, and rest satisfied in the disposals of his providence, how harsh and severe soever they seem to them.

III. How necessary a duty this is for all christians. It is necessary—

1. With respect to the honour of God; for trust is the practical acknowledgment of his being and attributes—his wisdom, goodness, and power. Of his being. It is natural worship. *Jure venit cultus ad sibi quisque deos*: Jonah i. 5, 'Then the mariners were afraid, and cried every man unto his god.' Whom we take to be our god, we trust him with our all: Ps. lxii. 8, 'Trust in him at all times, ye people, pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us.' All invocation and worship is founded in trust: Rom. x. 14, 'How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?' And as we acknowledge his being the proper object of our worship, so his attributes. His wisdom: Prov. iii. 5, 6, 'Trust in the Lord with all thy heart, and lean not to thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy path.' We see none is so wise to guide and direct us as God. So we show that his power is above all power when we can depend on him, running the hazard of the greatest terrors: Dan. iii. 17, 18, 'If it be so, our God, whom we serve, is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace; and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.' On the contrary, it is a despising or lessening of God's power to be afraid of man: Isa. li. 12, 13, 'I, even I, am he that comforteth you; who art thou, that thou shouldst be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass? and forgettest the Lord thy Maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth?' So for goodness. You are so satisfied with the promise and thing promised that you can forsake all other happiness and hopes in confidence of salvation offered to you by Jesus Christ: Heb. x. 39, 'We are not of them who draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.' In lesser things, it is a great owning of God's goodness, when you have this persuasion in your minds, and can say, I know that my good God will not forsake me, as the apostle doth in effect: 2 Tim. iv. 17, 18, 'All men forsook me, but the Lord stood with me, and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion; and the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and preserve me to his heavenly kingdom.'

2. To quicken our duty ; for unless we can trust God, the soul will never be faithful and true to him ; but when we seek all safety and comfort from his protection, we will more study to please him. Our dependence is the great tie upon our obedience : 1 Tim. iv. 10, 'Therefore we both labour, &c., because we trust in God.' This giveth life to our service, comfort in our reproaches, support in all our trials ; so that we go on readily, without disquiet of mind, in all our difficulties, upright in our dealings. Men warp and turn aside to crooked ways, unless they be persuaded that God taketh care of them, and will maintain them by honest and lawful means. The ground of uprightness is the persuasion of God's all-sufficiency : Gen. xiii. 1, 'The Lord appeared to Abraham, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God ; walk before me, and be thou perfect.' On the other side, the ground of apostasy is unbelief : Heb. iii. 12, 'Take heed, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. So it is the ground of shifts : Isa. xxviii. 15, 'We have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves.' They that cannot depend upon God fly to other means.

3. To settle and quiet our hearts and minds. He that looks no higher than the course of affairs in the world, can never have any firm peace in his own soul ; but trust easeth of all fears, cares, and estuations of mind : Ps. cxii. 7, 'He shall not be afraid of evil tidings ; his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord ;' Prov. xvi. 3, 'Commit thy way unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established.' This allayed the storms in David's spirit : Ps. xlii. 5, 'Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted in me ? hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance.' When we can refer all to God, then we are at peace : Phil. iv. 6, 7, 'Be careful for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your request be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.'

Use 1. To reprove those that trust something else instead of God. Every man hath some shadow under which he refresheth himself, some crutch upon which he leaneth, some satisfaction wherein his soul is pleased, or something that shall bear him up or bear him out in the course he taketh.

1. Some trust in the creature against God ; as those that strengthen themselves in their sins because of their great power, wealth, and interest : Ps. lii. 7, 'Lo, this is the man that made not God his portion, but trusted in the abundance of his riches, and strengthened himself in his wickedness.' Alas ! they will soon find God is too hard for them, blasting all their power and wealth, and bringing it to nothing, when once it is a fit sacrifice to his justice.

2. Some trust in the creature without God ; as in wealth, and honour, and favour of men, &c. ; and so God is neglected, and the sinner is laid asleep in the midst of the greatest soul-dangers. Alas ! all things on this side God will prove a ruinous habitation to us : 1 Tim. vi. 17, 'Trust not in uncertain riches.' So for honour : Ps. xlix. 12, 'Man being in honour, abideth not.' God can soon lay it in the dust. How often have we seen the most shining glory go out in a snuff ? The

favour of men is very variable. The prophet cried out, 2 Sam. xix. 43, 'We have ten parts in David.' But in the very next verse, 2 Sam. xx. 1, one said, 'We have no part in David.' However, they die: 1 Kings i. 21, 'Otherwise it shall come to pass, when my lord the king shall sleep with his fathers,' &c. In the general, Ps. cxviii. 8, 9, 'It is better to trust in the Lord, than to put confidence in man. It is better to trust in the Lord, than to put confidence in princes.' If you were as careful to please God as to get men's favour, it would be better for you than within a while you will find it to be.

3. Some trust in the creature, in a co-ordination with God; as those in Isa. iv. 1, 'In that day shall seven women take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel; only let us be called by thy name, and take away our reproach.' God hath the name, but they trust the creature indeed; or at least hope, by both conjunctly, to make their felicity. They serve God and mammon. They see riches will not cure a disease, prevent death, save a soul; these things they leave to God; but wealth will do much in the world, and therefore they trust in wealth as well as God's promises: Mark x. 24, 'How hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God?' Alas! this is false: Luke xii. 15, 'Take heed, and beware of covetousness; for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.' This sin appeareth when we cannot deny ourselves for God.

Use 2. To press you entirely to trust yourselves in God's hands. Here take notice of—

1. The adventure of faith after disappointments: Luke v. 5, 'And Simon answering, said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have caught nothing: nevertheless, at thy word I will let down the net.' Dig the pit, and see if God will fill it with rain.

2. The waiting of faith, though you find not success presently: Isa. xxviii. 15, 'Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves.' Greedy and impatient longing must have present satisfaction.

3. The resolution of faith: Job xiii. 15, 'Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.'

4. The submission and resignation of faith. Make sure of heaven, and for other things, let God order them as he pleaseth: Mat. vi. 33, 'Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.'

5. The prudence of faith. Settle your mind as to present necessities; and for future contingencies, leave them to God's providence.
