THE COMPLETE WORKS OF THOMAS MANTON, D.D. VOL. V

by Thomas Manton

Thomas Manton's theological work addressing church and Christian living.

36 Chapters

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Chapter 0

The Complete Works of Thomas Manton, D.D. Vol. V

THE COMPLETE WORKS

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THOMAS MANTON, D.D.

VOLUME V.

CONTAINING

A PRACTICAL COMMENTARY; OR, AN EXPOSITION, WITH NOTES, ON THE EPISTLE OF JUDE.

MEAT OUT OF THE EATER.

ENGLAND'S SPIRITUAL LANGUISHING, ITS CAUSES AND CURE.

SERMONS AT MORNING EXERCISE.

PREFACE TO SMECTYMNUUS REDIVIVUS.

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VOL. V.

Chapter 3

THE EPISTLE DEDICATORY.

To the Religious and Honourable Lady, Letitia Popham, wife to Colonel Alexander Popham.

MADAM,--It is a lovely conjunction when goodness and greatness meet together. Persons of estate and respect in the world have more temptations and hindrances than others, but greater obligations to own God. The great landlord of the world expecteth a rent from every country cottage, but a large revenue from great houses. Now usually it falleth out so that they that hold the greatest farms pay the least rent. [1] Never is the Lord more neglected and dishonoured than in great men's houses, in the very face of all his bounty. If religion chance to get in there, it is soon worn out again. Though vices live long in a family, and run in a blood from father to son, yet it is a rare case to see strictness of religion carried on for three or four descents. It was the honour of Abraham's house that from father to son for a long while they were heirs of the same promise,' Heb. xi. 9; but where is there such a succession to be found in the houses of our gentry? The father, perchance, professeth godliness (for ou polloi, saith the apostle, 1 Cor. i. 26, not many noble,' &c., there are a few--he doth not say there are none), and a carnal son cometh and turneth all out of doors, as if he were ashamed of his father's God. The causes of this mischief may be supposed to be these:--(1.) Plenty ill governed disposeth to vice and sin, as a rank soil is apt to breed weeds. (2.) Brave spirits (as the world counteth them) think strictness inglorious,' [2] and the power of religion a base thing, that taketh off from their grandeur and esteem. A loose owning of Christianity is honourable, since the kings of the earth have counted it one of the

fairest flowers of their crowns to be styled the Catholic King,' the most Christian King,' the Defender of the Faith,' &c. But a true submission to the power of it is made a scorn, as being contrary to that liberty of fashions, vanity of compliment, and some Gentile customs, which, in a fond compliance with the humour of the age, they are loath to part with. It were a rude zeal to deny them honest civilities, but certain customs and modes there are inconsistent with the severity of religion, which, rather than men will part with, they will even break with God himself. (3.) The marriage of children into carnal families, wherein they consult rather with the greatness of their house than the continuing of Christ's interest in their line and posterity. How careful are they that they should match in their own rank for blood and estate! Should they not be as careful for religion also? But even good people give a suspicion sometimes that they do not believe what they do profess. That this is the ready way to undo all that hath been set on foot for God, is evident by scripture and experience. See Gen. vi. 1-3; Ps. cvi. 38; Neh. xiii. 25, 26. In scripture, we read of Jehoram, who is said to walk in the way of the kings of Israel, for the daughter of Ahab was his wife,' 2 Kings viii. 18; and in ecclesiastical history, of Valens the emperor, who, by marrying with an Arian lady, was himself ensnared in that wicked opinion.

All this is spoken, madam, to quicken you to the greater care in your relations, that you may settle a standing interest for Jesus Christ so hopefully already begun in your house and family. It will not be pleasing to you that I should publish upon the house-top what God hath done for you, or enabled you to do for him. Go on still, and be faithful. There are few that I know in the world who have more cause to honour God than you have.

That I have inscribed this Commentary to your name will not seem strange to those that know my great obligations to yourself and your worthy husband, and your interest in that beloved place [3] and people among whom I have had so many sweet opportunities of enjoying, and, I hope, of glorifying God, and from whom I should never have removed but upon those weighty causes and considerations which did even rend me from them. And though I am now transplanted, and owe very much service and respect elsewhere, yet that noble lord [4] that gave me the call will allow me full time and leave to pay my old debts, that afterward I may be the more in a capacity publicly to express my gratitude to himself.

If any should be so foolish as to object the unsuitableness of dedicating a comment on the scripture to one of your sex (as it seemeth some did to Jerome [5]), I shall not plead that two of the books of scripture are named from women, Ruth and Esther, that an epistle which maketh up a part of the canon is inscribed to an elect lady,' that if this be a fault, others have faulted in like kind before me; [6] but only that this is a practical commentary, and surely in matters of practice (which is every Christian's common interest) your sex hath a full share. Though your course of life be more private and confined, yet you have your service. The scriptures speak of the woman's gaining upon the husband, 1 Peter iii. 1; seasoning the children, Prov. xxxi. 1, 2 Tim. i. 5; encouraging the servants in a way of godliness, especially of their own sex; it is said, Esther iv. 16, I also and my maidens will fast likewise.' These maidens were either Jews, and then it showeth what servants should be taken into a nearer attendance, such as savour of religion (see Ps. ci. 6), or else, which is more probable, such as she had instructed in the true religion, for these maidens were appointed her by the eunuch, and were before instructed in court

fashions, Esther ii. 9; but that did not satisfy. She taketh time to instruct them in the knowledge of the true God, and it seemeth in her apartment had many opportunities of religious commerce with them in the worship of God. Madam, how far you practise these duties it is not necessary that I should tell the world. Persevere with cheer fulness, and in due time you shall reap if you faint not. The good Lord shed abroad the comforts and graces of his Spirit more abundantly into your heart, which is the unfeigned desire of him who is, madam, your most obliged and respectively [7] observant,

Tho. Manton.

[1] Qui majores terras possident, minores census solvunt.'--Parisienis.

[2] Coguntur esse mali ne viles habeantur.'--Salvian.

[3] Stoke Newington.

[4] The Right Honourable William Earl of Bedford.

[5] Hieron. Epist. 140.

[6] Hieron. to Celantia, Asella, &c.

[7] That is, "respectfully."--Ed.

Chapter 4

TO THE READER.

GOOD READER,--The people of God have ever been exercised with two sorts of enemies persecutors and sectaries: it is hard to say which is worst. When the Christian church began first to look forth in the world, there were adverse powers without ready to crush it, and Libertines who, like worms bred within the body, sought to devour the entrails and eat out the very bowels of it. The first ringleader was Simon Magus, and there followed Menander, Saturninus, Basilides, Carpocrates, Cerinthus, Ebion, Cerdo, Marcion, Tatianus, Valentinus, and many others, who, being once turned aside from the truth and the fellowship of the faithful, lost all awe of God, and were given up to a sottish judgment to believe all kinds of fables and fancies. The monsters of Africa came from the unnatural commixtures of the beasts running wild in the deserts; so when men had once broken through the hedge, mingling their own fancies with the word of God, by an unnatural production they brought forth such monstrous and absurd opinions.

In succeeding ages the devil hath often played over the old game, sometimes oppressing the church by the tyranny of pseudo-Christians, as many martyrs being made by antichristian as pagan persecutions, Rev. xiv. 13; at other times corrupting the truth by error, or rendering it suspicious by the divisions about it. Heresies revolve as fashions, and in the course of a few years antiquated errors revive again, and that by their means who did not so much as know them by name.

When God first called his people out of Babylon by Luther's reformation, and the Christian religion began to be restored to its pristine purity, there was not only a Roman party to persecute, but a fanatical party to perplex the estate of reformation and retard the

course of the gospel, as histories do abundantly declare, especially Sleidan in his Commentaries.

What hath been our late experience we all know, and have cause to bewail: as soon as we were freed from our hard taskmasters, and a door of hope began to be opened to us, a swarm of Libertines have arisen among us, and do every day increase in number, power, and malice, and under various forms oppugn the unquestionable interests of Jesus Christ, to the great scandal of reformation, and the saddening of the hearts of the godly. We seem to be ripe for a judgment, but from what corner the storm shall blow we cannot tell; some fear a return of popery, and that a second deluge of antichristianism shall overwhelm the western churches. The Papists, I confess, are dangerous, but the great and next fear I think to be from Libertines and a yokeless generation of men, who are most reproachful to religion and most troublesome.

The spirit and drift of this epistle is carried out mainly against this fanatical and libertine party, and therefore I suppose it to be a mistake in Dr Willet, Mr Perkins, and others, when they would turn the edge of it against the Papists. I confess they had a temptation that way, these being the only heretical party with whom the church of God was then in suit, and symbolising in many things with those of the other extreme, as usually darkness and darkness doth better agree than light and darkness; but certainly the party described here are not a domineering faction, that carry things by power and greatness and height of natural abilities, as the Papists do, but a creeping party, such as by sordid and clancular ways seek to undermine the truth, a kind of mean and loose sort of people, that vented monstrous and gross conceits, chiefly out of envy, against those that excelled in gifts and place; and if our modern Ranters, Familists, Quakers, be not here

described in their lively colours (as if the apostle had lived to hear their blasphemous expressions and that contempt which they cast upon the officers of the church), I confess then I understand no thing of the whole epistle. If the judicious reader let alone the larger discussion of the observations, and go but over the explications of each verse, he will soon find my observation true.

What I have done, through grace, to the clearer understanding of the apostle's scope, and the larger explanation of the common-places here offered, I shall not mention, but leave to the reader's judgment. Some will blame me for being too large, and others in many places for being too short. I shall only let the first sort know that in the larger explications of points of doctrine I have rather satisfied the desires of others than followed my own judgment, who, when these things were first delivered (which was long since) in the way of short notes, were willing to hear the points more largely debated, and so I went over them again in a sermon-fashion. If any blame me for being too short, let them know that therein I have more satisfied myself, as keeping to the laws of an expository exercise. I confess I am so conscious to the many imperfections of this work, that the reader had never been troubled with it had it not been extorted from me by such importunity as I could not withstand: especially did I judge the publication needless, the elaborate commentary of my reverend brother, Mr William Jenkyns, being already printed; but when I saw that we went different ways in prosecuting the same truth, that objection ceased. Seasonable things must be often urged, and the variety of method maketh the repetition grateful. I observe God's providence in it, when divers men fall upon the same work, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every truth might be established. Beza, I remember, persuadeth Olevian to print his meditations on the Galatians, though many excellent

writers had but lately and diligently explained that epistle. Dr King, Dr Abbot, and Dr Benefield all wrote upon Jonah, and with approbation, near about the same time. As much as my occasions would permit me, I consulted with my reverend brother's book, and when I found any point at large discussed by him, I either omitted it or mentioned it very briefly, so that his labours will be necessary to supply the weaknesses of mine.

This work hath been long in the press, and no wonder, the author lying under such an oppression of business, it being carried on by snatches and spare hours. Many faults have been occasioned, whether by the obscurity of the copy or the negligence of the printer I will not now determine. Surely I have had to do with those that learned how to make a pitcher in a tub, or else they would never have so pitifully mangled the Greek and Latin sentences that in some places they are scarce intelligible. I have added the errata in the end, which must be consulted with, or else the reader will hardly find sense, [8] and in some places not true doctrine. The tables I have collected with some diligence, the one of scriptures, which are either vindicated or largely illustrated in this commentary, the other of the principal matters, especially the common-places here discussed. If by all thou findest any help in the way of thy heavenly calling, bless God, and forget not to put up one prayer for the meanest of the Lord's servants,

Tho. Manton.

[8] Unfortunately the errata are worse printed than the text, and themselves contain many errata. It is hoped that nearly all errors are corrected in the present edition.--Ed.

Chapter 5

Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that

are sanctified by God the Father, preserved in Jesus Christ, and called.--Ver. 1.

THIS epistle, as others, beginneth with usual Christian salutations; these are continued through the two first verses, in which you have:

1. The person saluting, Jude, the author of the epistle.

2. The persons saluted, the believers of that age.

3. The form of salutation, ver. 2, mercy, and peace, and love be multiplied.

This first verse presenteth us with the two first circumstances, the saluter and the saluted. (1.) The saluter is described by his name, Judas; his office and condition of life, the servant of Jesus Christ; by his kindred and relation, and brother of James. (2.) The saluted, they are described--(1st.) By their condition, kle'tois, called, that is to read first, as Beza. (2d.) By the effects and manifestations of it, which are two: First, sanctified by God the Father; secondly, preserved in Jesus Christ. These are the parts: I shall explain them branch by branch in the order propounded, with practical hints from each, which I shall handle in no fuller latitude than the present text will allow.

1. The saluter, and there his name, Judas,' called also Thaddeus,' Mat. x. 3, and Lebbaeus;' these several names implying the same thing, and were given him either by the people or the disciples, partly to distinguish him from Judas the apostate, partly to note his constancy in confessing and praising God; for so it signifieth, as you may see, Gen. xxix. 35, Now Leah said, I will praise the Lord, therefore she called his name Judah.'

Obs. Divers note hence--(1.) That Christian names should be significant, such as may remember us of duty. (2.) That it is lawful to divulge or conceal our names in our writings, according as it may make for the glory of God to do either the one or the other. Jude mentioneth his name, but Paul doth not, or whosoever was the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews. (3.) That godly men and wicked may both be called by the same name; so Judas the apostle and Judas the apostate; there was Enoch, Cain's son, Gen. iv. 17, and Enoch, Seth's son, of the church line, that walked with God,' Gen. v. 22. But to mention these things is more than enough; the next circumstance will afford us more.

2. His office and condition, the servant of Jesus Christ.' It is a thing usual with the apostles to prefix this among other their honorary titles; as Rom. i. 1, Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ;' so Phil. i. 1. The greatest honour that he would put upon himself and Timothy was this, Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ.' This term, a servant of God or Christ, in the use of scripture, is several ways applied. (1.) It may be understood of any kind of subserviency to God's will and secret counsels, or instrumentality in the execution of his decrees; so wicked men may be said to be God's servants, so far forth as he serveth his designs of their endeavours; as Cyrus was God's servant, because he should perform all his pleasure; so Nebuchadnezzar, Jer. xxvii. 6, These things have I given into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, my servant,' (2.) It noteth a pious care to perform God's revealed will; they that out of a sense of his love resign up themselves to do his will are called his servants: so he that is called in the Lord,' whether he be bond or free, is said to be Christ's servant,' 1 Cor. vii. 22. So godly masters are said to have the Lord for their master: Eph. vi. 9, Knowing that your master is also in heaven,' In the former place he saith a servant is God's freeman; and

here, that a master is God's servant. (3.) It noteth designation to any public office for God's glory; those that do more eminently or more nearly serve God in some peculiar office are called his servants; as magistrates: Rom. xiii. 4, He is the minister of God for thy good;' and ver. 6, God's ministers attending continually for this thing.' But yet more especially they are called ministers and servants who sustain the public offices of the church; as 2 Tim. ii. 24, The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle to all men, apt to teach, patient,' meaning one employed in the public ministry. So the priests of the Old Testament were called the Lord's servants; as Ps. cxxxiv. 1, Behold, bless ye the Lord, all ye servants of the Lord, which by night stand in the house of the Lord.' He speaketh to the priests that were to watch in the temple; and in this sense it is said, Amos iii. 7, I have sent my servants the prophets.' But now among these ministers and officers of the church the prophets and apostles are styled so by way of eminency. Yea, yet further, Christ, because of his office of Mediator, which is the highest office, and proper to the head of the church, is called God's servant; as Isa. xlix. 3, Thou art my servant;' and Isa. liii. 11, By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many.' To apply all now to the case in hand: Jude is called a servant of Jesus Christ,' not only as one that had given up himself to do his will as a Christian, but as an apostle. [9] Let us now observe something hence. Obs. 1. Observe, first, that Jude placeth his service among his titles. He might have urged other things to render himself honourable to the world, but he doth not stand upon those things; it is enough for him to say, Jude, a servant.' As Jude, the Lord's cousin, calleth himself his servant, so doth Mary, the Lord's mother, style herself his handmaid: Luke i. 38, Behold the handmaid of the Lord.' And the apostles generally urge it as one of the fairest flowers in their gar land, the

honour of being Christ's servants; yea, Christ himself counteth it no dishonour to be styled God's servant. The meanest offices about princes are accounted honourable; to be a groom there is better than to be a lord elsewhere. Servire Deo regnare est--it is royal and kingly to be God's servant; indeed, every servant there is a king, 1 Peter ii. 9, Rev. i. 6; as Zeba and Zalmunna said of Gideon's brethren, They each one resembled the children of a king,' so all these are spiritual kings, that live the noblest and freest life in the world. And as we have a glorious master, so consider your fellow-servants, the glorified saints and we make but one family, Eph. iii. 15. And the angels themselves are called his ministers: Ps. ciii. 21, Ye ministers of his that do his pleasure;' they are a part of God's attendance, and wait upon their master's person. When we have such fellow-servants, we should not count our work a slavery and baseness; it can be no disparagement to us to be in the same rank and order with the angels and saints departed. Well, then, learn to value the honour that you have by Christ's service; as that emperor counted it a greater privilege to be a member of the church than head of the empire. Look upon duty as an honour, and service as a privilege: honorabilia legis, Hosea viii. 12, so the Vulgar. And if ever you be put to your choice, either to enjoy the greatest outward honours, or to serve Christ with disgrace, choose the latter. Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter when he came to age,' Heb. xi. 24. 25. Galeacius Carraciolus left the honour of his marquisate for an obscure life and the gospel at Geneva. Indignities and dishonours done you in the way of duty are honours; reproaches for Christ's sake' are treasure, Heb. xi. 26. One of Paul's honorary titles is, Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ,' Philem. 1; and elsewhere he holdeth up his chain in a kind of triumph: For the hope of Israel am I bound with this chain,' Acts

xxviii. 20. Whatever befalleth us in and for our service to Christ, be it never so disgraceful, it is rather a mark of honour than a brand of shame.

Obs. 2. Observe, again, his relation to Christ is expressed by service; as he describeth himself to be James's brother, so Christ's servant; by that means he was entitled to Christ; if we would be Christ's we must do his will: our relation ariseth from service, John xii. 26. Therefore I shall here take occasion to show you what it is to be Christ's servants. (1.) Whoever is Christ's servant must resign and give up himself wholly to the will of Christ; for he that is Christ's servant, he is so by covenant and consecration. We are indeed Christ's by all kind of rights and titles; he made us, and not we ourselves;' no creature is of itself, and therefore it is not its own, but another's. It is God's prerogative alone to love himself and seek himself, because he alone is without obligation and dependence; but we owe ourselves to him, and therefore cannot without robbery call ourselves our own. Your tongues are not your own to speak what you please, Ps. xii. 4, nor your hearts your own to think what you please, nor your hands your own to do what you please; by virtue of your creation you are another's, and are bound to live and act for another, according to his will, for his glory. But this is not all; by redemption you are Christ's: Ye are bought with a price,' 1 Cor. vi. 20, as the redeemed are bound to serve him that ransomed them. If a man had bought another out of captivity, or he had sold himself, all his strength or service belonged to the buyer. Christ hath bought us from the worst slavery, and with the greatest price; no thraldom so bad as bondage to sin and Satan, no prison so black as hell; and certainly Christ's blood is better than a little money. So that to live as if we were at our own disposal is to defraud Christ of his purchase. Thus we are Christ's by creation and

redemption; but now, if we would be his servants, we must be his by voluntary contract and spiritual resignation: Yield up yourselves,' &c., Rom. vi. 13. Christ loveth to have his right and title established by our own consent. We take Christ for lord and master, and give up ourselves to him, that we may be no longer at our own disposal, and therefore it is not only robbery, but treachery and breach of covenant to seek ourselves in anything. This resignation must be made out of a sense of Christ's love to us in his death and sufferings: 2 Cor. v. 15, Christ died, that they which live should not henceforth live to themselves, but unto him that died for them.' We enter upon other services out of hopes, but we enter upon Christ's service out of thankfulness. Again, this resignation must be universal, without reservation of any part. You must have no other master but God: Mat. vi. 24, Ye cannot serve two masters, ye cannot serve God and mammon.' Usually men divide themselves between God and the world; they would give their consciences to Christ, and their hearts to mammon. The devil pleadeth for a part, for by that means he knoweth that the whole will fall to his share; therefore all, the whole man, in vow, purpose, and resolution, must be given up to God. (2.) Having given up yourselves to God's service, you must walk as his servants; that is, not as you list, but as the master pleaseth. The angels are God's ministers, doing his pleasure,' Ps. ciii. 21. A servant hath no will of his own, but hath given up his liberty to the directions and commands of another; therefore, if you be God's servants, you must earnestly desire the knowledge of his will, and readily comply with it; you must not do things as they please self and flesh, but as they please God. David beggeth for knowledge as God's servant: Ps. cxix. 125, I am thy servant, grant me understanding, that I may know thy testimonies.' A faithful servant would not willingly offend his master, and therefore

would fain know what is his will. They plead with God, and search themselves, Rom. xii. 2, and all to know his pleasure; and not only to know it, but to do it, otherwise they are worthy of many stripes by Christ's own sentence. The master's will should be motive enough, 1 Thes. iv. 3, v. 13; 1 Peter ii. 15. If God will have it so if Jesus Christ will have it so, it is enough to a faithful servant. I he very signification of God's will carrieth with it reason enough to enforce the practice of it. Yea, you must equally comply with every will of God, not only with the easy and pleasant ways of obedience, but such as cross lusts and interests. When two men go together, a man cannot tell whom the servant followeth till they part. When God and our lusts or our interests command contrary things, then you are put to the trial whether you are God's servants.

Obs. 3. Again, observe from the proper acception of the phrase, as it is applied to those that stand before the Lord in some special office and ministration; as to the apostles, and by consequence to the ministers of the gospel. The note is, that ministers are servants of Jesus Christ; Paul a servant, and Jude a servant. We are to deal between God and the soul, factors for heaven. There is many a good inference may be collected from this notion. I shall refer all to two heads, the ministers' duty and the people's. (1.) It hinteth duty to ministers; it teacheth us diligence in our Lord's work, for we are servants, and must give an account, Heb. xiii. 17, what good we have done in our places, how we have employed our parts, improved our interests, for his glory: Mat. xxv. 19, After a long time the lord of those servants cometh and reckoneth with them.' We are entrusted with the talent of gifts, with the talent of office and authority in the church; now God will see what we have done for his glory, whether we have beaten our fellow-servants, or helped them in the way of

salvation; whether our pound hath been hidden in a napkin, or laid out for the gain of souls. Again, it hinteth faithfulness. We are not to trade for ourselves, and to drive on our own designs of credit and advantage; we are servants, employed for the master's uses: Gal. i. 10, Do I yet please men? If I pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.' A man that sets up for himself is to trade for himself; but all that a servant doth should be for his master's honour and profit. (2.) It hinteth duty to the people. Regard ministers as servants of Christ, that you may give their persons all due honour. Consider, God hath retained them as for a nearer service to himself: 1 Cor. iv. 1, Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of the gospel.' The world counteth the calling probrosum artificium, a sordid artifice and way of living, whereby men set their tongues and parts to sale, and think that of all callings this can best be spared, therefore it is high time to assert the dignity of the office. Men should not think so basely of those who are Christ's servants, not only to do his business, but to wait upon his person, his special attendants; nay, ambassadors, that impersonate and represent their Master, 2 Cor. v. 20. Again, bear our doctrine with meekness and patience; we are but servants. If the message which we bring be displeasing, remember it is the will of our master; it is not in our power to comply with your lusts and humours, if the scripture doth not. As God said to Jeremiah, Jer. xv. 19, Let them return unto thee, but return not thou to them.' So you should comply with the word; we cannot comply with you. The false prophets returned to the people, complied with their humours. We must deliver our message, pardon to whom pardon, terror to whom terror is due: servants must be faithful. Thus must you look upon them as servants, yet but as servants, that you may not fondly idolise their persons: What is Paul and Apollos, but

ministers by whom ye believe?' 1 Cor. iii. 5. It is the old way of flesh and blood to sacrifice to the next hand. And that you may know to whom to go for the fruit of the ordinance, when we have done our work, there is one that cometh after us who is mightier than we,' Mat. iii. 11, who giveth the increase' to what we have planted and watered,' 1 Cor. iii. 6.

3. The author of the epistle is described by his kindred and relation, and brother of James. There were two in the college of the apostles of that name, James of Zebedee, and James the son of Alpheus,' who was also called the brother of the Lord,' that is, his cousin-german, who is the person intended, for Jude was his brother, as Mat. xiii. 55, Is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas?' Now this clause is added, partly to distinguish him from the other Judas, called Iscariot, who betrayed our Lord.

Obs. It is good to prevent all visible scandals and exceptions against our persons. I observe this, because the scripture doth elsewhere: John xiv. 22, Judas saith unto him, not Iscariat, How is it that thou wilt manifest thyself to us, and not unto the world?' The scripture would not have you mistake him that said so. Men drink less freely of a suspected fountain. Partly because this would make the epistle the more welcome. James was of great credit and repute, reckoned by Paul among the pillars,' Gal. ii. 9. From whence observe:--

Obs. 1. That it is lawful to use the credit of others, for the advantage of the truth. In the 15th of the Acts, the apostles might have deter mined the case by their own infallible spirit, but for the greater credit sake they take in the consent of others: ver. 23, The apostles, and elders, and brethren,' &c. Paul, dealing with heathens, quoteth the sayings of their own writers in divers places, which may justify the unaffected use of sentences and passages out of the ancient

writers of the church. It is good to bait the naked hook of truth sometimes with the advantage of carnal credit. Again, observe:--

Obs. 2. That we should walk so that we may be an honour to our relations. This is one of Jude's titles, the brother of James.' He took it for an honour to. be related to so eminent an apostle. Worthy men reflect a credit upon their families. To be brother, father, son, to such as have deserved well of the church, is no mean honour and engagement to virtue. Well, then, live so that you may not disgrace your lineage; and you that come of worthy ancestors, walk answerably to the dignity of your extraction. The images of your progenitors are not more sullied with dust, and smoke, and age, than they are with your vices. The Spirit of God brands a degenerate issue for walking unworthy their birth and the privileges of their blood, 1 Chron. iv. 22, 23.

Vide Junium et alios in locum. So much for the saluter.

Let us now come to the saluted; they are described by their condition, called; by the effects and manifestations of it, which are two, sanctification and preservation.

1. Their condition, called, for that both in the construction of the words, and the order of nature, is to be read first. There is an outward calling, and in that sense Christ speaketh, Mat. xx. 16, Many are called, but few are chosen;' that is, outwardly called in the invitations of the word; so all wicked men that live within the hearing of the gospel; but it seemeth they are only called obiter, by the by, as they live among the elect: those are called kata prothesin, according to purpose.' Rom. viii. 28. But there is an inward and effectual calling, by the persuasion of the Spirit, or the voice of the Son of God,' which causeth life, John v. 25. The apostle speaketh here of the called according to purpose,' and that by an inward and effectual calling. Whence note:--

Obs. That it is the condition of the people of God to be a called people; this is first in their description: see Rom. i. 6, Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ.' So the Corinthians are said to be saints by calling, 1 Cor. i. 2, and Heb. iii. 1, Holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling.' Now the saints are a called people, first, because all they have and enjoy is from God's calling; a Christian is nothing and hath nothing but what God is pleased to work in him by his creating word: Calling the things that are not as though they were.' Rom. iv. 17. Now God is pleased to work this way, partly to give us a warrant, that we may possess our privileges in Christ without intrusion and usurpation: No man taketh this honour upon him till he be called of God,' Heb. v. This is that they have to show to conscience, that we do not presume and usurp; we have a calling so to do. Why dost thou, vile wretch, go to God in the name of Christ? How dost thou that art a sinner look him in the face, lay hold of Christ, hope for glory? Still the call is our warrant and title. If it should be asked of the guests that came in a wedding garment, Friends, how durst ye come hither, and approach the presence chamber of the king's son? they might answer, We were bidden to the wedding, Mat. xxii. So in Mat. xx., Why do not you go into the vineyard?' Their answer was, No man hath hired us;' they had no calling. Partly to give us encouragement: we need not only leave to come to God by Christ, but also quickening and encouragement, for we are backward. In other preferments there needeth nothing but leave, for there men are forward enough; but here guilt maketh us shy of God, and God is forced to call and holloa after us. By nature we are not only exiles, but fugitives. Before God banished Adam, he first ran away from him, he ran to the bushes, and then God called him, Adam, where art thou?' Gen. iii. 9. How often doth God holloa after us in the word before we return and come out of the bushes! He

maketh proclamation, Isa. lv. 1, Ho, every one that thirsteth,' &c. We are under spiritual bondage, as the Israelites were in Egypt under corporal bondage, and God sendeth again and again, and out of very anguish of heart we will not believe him; therefore he calleth and crieth, Sinners, where are you? why will you not return unto me? God's outward call is managed by men, and therefore it is very hard to persuade them to discern the voice of God; as Samuel would not be persuaded but that it was Eli called him, when it was the Lord. We think it to be the charity of the minister, and will not easily acknowledge a call from God, and therefore do not only need leave, but encouragement. Partly because God will work in a way suitable to his own nature and ours; fortiter et suaviter, strongly like himself, and sweetly with respect to us; and therefore he doth not only draw but call; not only put forth the power of his Spirit, but exhort and invite by the word. The efficacy of divine grace is conveyed this way more suitably to the nature of man; there is grace offered in the gospel, and the Spirit compelleth to come in. In all the works of God, there is some word by which his power is educed and exercised. In the creation, Let there be light,' &c. At the resurrection there is a trump, and the voice of an archangel, Arise, ye dead, and come to judgment.' In all Christ's miraculous cures there are some words used, Be thou clean,' and Be thou whole,' and Be thou opened;' and to Lazarus in the grave Christ useth words of ministerial excitation, Lazarus, come forth.' So in converting a sinner, there is not only a secret power, but a sweet call and invitation; some word by which this power is conveyed and represented in a way suitable to our capacity. For all these reasons doth God work grace by calling.

Again, God's people are well styled a called people, because they are so many ways called: from self to Christ, from sin to holiness, from

misery to happiness and glory. They are called from self to Christ: Mat. xi. 28, Come unto me, all ye that are heavy laden.' The main end of a call is to bring Christ and the soul together; every dispensation of God hath a voice; and God speaketh to us by conscience, by his works, by benefits, by crosses, but chiefly by his word, the application of which by the Spirit is, as it were, an awakening call; but the chief call of God is by the voice of the gospel, wherein the offers of grace are discovered to us: Come, poor wearied soul, come to Christ, and thou shalt find ease and comfort. Again, they are called from sin to holiness: 1 Thes. iv. 7, God hath not called us to uncleanness, but to holiness.' Though the immediate end of divine calling be faith, yet the intermediate end is holiness, as the ultimate end is glory. Thus we are called out of Babylon into Sion, from the tents of Kedar into the tents of Shem, from nature to grace, and the power of Satan into the kingdom of God; in short, this call is a separation from uncleanness, and all common and vile uses. Again, they are called from misery to happiness and glory, from aliens to be friends, from darkness to light, 1 Peter ii. 9, from being enemies to be reconciled, from bastards to become sons, from vessels of wrath to be heirs of glory. With respect to all these sorts of calling it is termed sometimes a high calling,' Phil. iii. 14; sometimes a holy calling,' 2 Tim. i. 9; and sometimes a heavenly calling,' Heb. iii. 1. It is a high calling,' because of the honour and dignity of it; it is no small matter to be children of God, John i. 12; co-heirs with Christ, Rom. viii. 17; kings and priests to God, Rev. i. 6. Many are lifted up because they have borne offices, and are called to high places in the world: a Christian hath a calling more excellent, he is called to be a saint, a spiritual king, a holy priest to God. It is a holy calling,' because of the effect and purpose of it. Man's calling

may put dignity and honour upon us, but it cannot infuse grace; it may change our condition, but not our hearts. It is a heavenly calling' because of the author of it, God by his Spirit; and because of the aim of it; the grace whereby we are called came from heaven, and its aim and tendency is to bring us thither. See 1 Thes. ii. 14; 2 Peter i. 3, Called us to glory and virtue,' &c. We are first called to grace, and then to heaven; first the sweet voice saith, Come unto me,' and then the great voice, Come up hither:' from self, sin, and the world we are called off, that we may enjoy God in Christ for evermore. You see the reasons, let us apply it now.

Use 1. First, It serveth to press us to hearken to the Lord's call. Many are kept off by vanity and pleasures, others by their own fears. To the first sort I shall only represent the danger of neglecting God's invitation, and slighting a call: Prov. i. 25, 26, Ye have set at nought my counsel, therefore I will laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh.' God's wrath is never more terrible than when it is stirred up to avenge the quarrel of abused mercy. Men cannot endure that two things should be despised--their anger or their kindness. Nebuchadnezzar, when he thought his anger despised, he biddeth them heat the furnace seven times hotter; and David, when he thought his kindness despised, threatened to cut off from Nabal every one that pisseth against the wall.' Certainly the Lord taketh it ill when the renewed messages of his love are not regarded; and that is the reason why where mercy is most free, God is most quick and severe upon the refusal of it: the Lamb's wrath is most terrible, Ps. ii. 10; no fire so hot as that which is enkindled by the breath of the despised gospel. What a terrible threatening is there in the place alleged! I will laugh at their calamity.' It is the greatest happiness when the Lord rejoiceth to do us good,' and the greatest misery when he rejoiceth to

do us evil: God's laughing will certainly be the creatures' mourning. Consider, then, what an affront you put upon grace, when every vile thing is preferred before it. When the Lord offered Canaan to the Israelites, and they preferred Egypt before it, he swore, They should not enter into his rest,' Ps. xcv. 11; and those that preferred a yoke of oxen, a farm, or marriage, before the king's feast, the king protesteth against them, Luke xiv. 24, None of those that were bidden shall taste of my supper.' Whoever have glory and grace by Christ, they shall have none.

For the other sort, that are kept off by their own fears, they are wont to allege, It is true there is mercy in Christ for sinners, but Christ doth not call them. My brethren, what do you look for? an audible voice to speak to you, Thou John, thou Thomas, &c.? In the tenders of the gospel you are included as well as others, and why will you exclude yourselves? If God say sinners, you should subsume and reply, I am chief.' I remember it is said, John x. 3, Christ calleth his sheep by name, and leadeth them forth.' How doth Christ call them by name? By speaking expressly to their case, as if he did strike them upon the shoulders, and say; Here is comfort for thee. As at a feast, when there is a dish that we affect set upon the table, though all the company be free to make use of it, yet we say, Here is a dish for me. So should you apply and take to yourselves your own portion; though it be propounded generally, yet when God directeth the tongue of his messengers to speak so expressly to your case, that is all the calling by name which you can look for, since oracles are ceased, and therefore you should say, This was a dish provided for my hungry conscience, intended to me, &c. But they will reply, Sure there is no mercy for me, I am so unworthy. I answer--The invitation taketh no notice of worth, but of thirst: Rev. xxii. 17, Let him that is athirst come, and

whosoever will let him take of the water of life freely.' Thou art not worthy, but thou art thirsty, or else whence come these groans? And by the way take notice of the pride that is in legal dejection. Men are loath to be beholden to Christ; they would be worthy before they will come to him; and therefore the apostle useth that expression, ouch hupetagesan, Rom. x. 3, They have not submitted to the righteousness of God.' A proud creature would fain establish a righteousness in himself, and is loath to submit to take all from another; as an outward proud man preferreth a russet coat of his own before a silken garment that is borrowed or given him by another. But they are such sinners, &c. Ans. The more need to come to Christ; he came to call sinners,' Mat. ix. 13. It is no matter what thou hast been, but what thou wouldst be; Christ doth not call us because we are holy, but that we may be holy. Is it a rational plea in outward cases, I am too poor to take alms, I am too filthy to go to the water to be washed? But they have stood out against so many calls already, and scorned God's counsel. Ans. Wisdom calleth scorners, Prov. i. 22, Turn ye scorners; how long will ye delight in scorning?' It is a mercy that thou hast one call more; do not increase the guilt that thou complainest of. But I know not how to come to Christ. Ans. The blind and the lame are invited to the wedding, Mat. xxii., and wisdom calleth fools, Prov. ix. 4, Whoso is simple,' &c. The stray lamb is brought home upon the shepherd's shoulders, Luke xv. Oh! that these words might be spirit and life to you!

Use 2. Again, it presseth us to make our calling and election sure,' 2 Peter i. 10; that is, to evidence our election by our calling; for calling it is but election put in act. Election is nothing but God's love and intention to bestow saving grace upon such and such persons; and calling is nothing but the actual manifestation of God's love, or the application of saving grace: Rom. viii. 30, Whom he hath

predestinated, them he called.' Calling is the first and immediate fruit of election, by which it springeth forth, and is exercised on the vessels of mercy: So 2 Thes. ii. 13, 14, God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through the sanctification of the Spirit, and the belief of the truth, to the obtaining of the glory of God, whereunto he hath called you by my gospel.' Here is the whole method of salvation. The first rise and spring of mercy was at election, which breaketh out by effectual calling, and so floweth down in the channels of faith and holiness, till it lose itself in the ocean of everlasting glory. So that by calling, God executeth in time what he decreed before all time; and he that is called, may look backward upon eternal purposes of grace, and forward upon an eternal possession of glory. Well, then, if we would get any assurance of God's favour, or of our interest in everlasting glory, the great business we should labour in is to clear up our calling; it is the freest and surest discovery of God's love, and so fittest to bottom a confidence or assurance. In elective love, we have the best view of mercy, and a call is the first discovery and copy of it; for it is an act of God, which ariseth merely from his choice, preventing and anteceding, not only the merit, but the acts and industry of the creature: see 2 Tim. i. 9. Other acts of God's bounty follow the acts of the creature, but this is the first motion God maketh to the soul; he accepts us when we come, but he called us when we did not think of coming. In short, calling is the key of the gospel, the plank that is cast out to save a sinking sinner, a sure pledge of glory, which is therefore called the high prize of our calling,' Phil. iii. 14. Once more, here we have the clearest and most sensible experience of the work of grace. After conversion, the work may be carried on tacitly, and with more silence; but in calling and conversion, as in all changes, the operations of grace are more

sensible; we may grow insensibly, as a plant doth. The step from sin to grace is a work of greater difficulty and power than to go on from grace to grace; as the apostle maketh it a matter of more ease to save a saint than to gain a sinner, Rom. v. 8-10, and therefore degrees cannot be alike sensible as change of state. The apostle, speaking of the first conversion of the Thessalonians, he saith, 1 Thes. i. 9, Ye know what manner of entering we had unto you.' The first approaches of God's power and word to the soul, as they meet with more opposition, so they cannot but be more sensible, and leave a greater feeling upon us. It were strange if an almighty power should work in us, and we no way privy or conscious to it, and all done as in our sleep; to think so were to give security a soft pillow whereon to rest, and to suffer men to go away with golden dreams, though they feel no change in themselves, pleasing themselves with the supposition of imaginary grace, wrought without their privity and knowledge. I would not press too hard upon any tender conscience. I do foresee the objection that may be made, namely, that if calling giveth such a sensible experience of the work of grace, how cometh it then to pass that so few of God's children have assurance or any sense of their conversion? I answer--(1.) It is possible God's power may work in us, and we not be sensible of it. There is a difference between our outward and inward senses: we may lose our spiritual feeling; and inward sense doth not so clearly discern its object, because of the way in which God conveyeth His power; it is strong, but sweet; like the influences of the heavens; of a great efficacy, but scarce discerned: as there was a great power wrought in the Ephesians, but they did not discern it so sufficiently, Eph. i. 18, 19. (2.) It is the fault of God's children not to be sensible of the power that worketh in them; sometimes it is their carelessness, sometimes their peevishness. Their carelessness in not

observing the approaches of God, and how he worketh and breaketh in upon their hearts in the word; so that the time of love is not marked when it is present, nor remembered when it is past. As God said of Ephraim, Hosea xi. 3, When Ephraim was a child, I taught him to go, taking them by the arms, but they knew it not,' that is, did not observe it. So God communicateth grace to his people, giveth in help and supports, but they observe it not. Sometimes it is peevishness and perverseness of judgment: sense of sin, and many weaknesses, like a thick cloud, hinder their clear discerning. God hath called them, but they will not own and acknowledge it, and so underrate their spiritual condition. (3.) God doth not call every one in a like violent and sensible manner. Some men's conversion is more gentle and silent; whereas, to others, Christ cometh like a strong man armed, and snatcheth them out of the fire: some are drawn they know not how, and love, by a gentle blast, sweetly and softly bloweth open the door: Ere ever I was aware,' &c., Cant. vi. 12. Upon others the Spirit cometh like a mighty rushing wind,' and they are carried to Christ, as it were, by the gates of hell. As in the natural birth, some children are brought forth with more ease, others with greater pains and throes, so the new birth in some is without trouble and delay. God opened the heart of Lydia,' we read of no more, Acts xvi.; but others are brought in with more horror of conscience, extreme sorrow, and desperation. God biddeth men put a difference,' Jude 22, 23; so doth God himself. (4.) This different dispensation God useth according to his own pleasure; no certain rules can be given. Sometimes they that have had good education have least terrors, as being restrained from gross sins; sometimes most terrors, because they have withstood most means. Sometimes they that are called to the greatest services have most terrors, that they may speak the more evil of sin, because they have felt the bitterness of

it; sometimes it is quite otherwise; those that are not called to such eminent service drink most deeply of this cup, and taste the very dregs of sin, and serve only as monuments of the power of God's anger; whereas others are spared, and public work serveth instead of sorrow and trouble of conscience. Again, sometimes men and women of the most excellent and acute understandings are most troubled, as having the clearest apprehensions of the heinousness of sin, and terribleness of wrath. Again, at other times it cometh from ignorance, as fears arise in the dark, and weak spirits are apt to be terrified: sometimes these terrors fall on a strong body, as best able to bear it; sometimes on a weak, the devil taking advantage of the weakness of the body to raise disturbances in the mind. Many times in hot and fiery natures their changes are sudden, and carried on in an extreme way; whereas soft natures, whose motions are slower, are gently and by degrees surprised; they take impressions of grace insensibly. Thus you see no certain rules can be given; only in the general way we may observe, that this different dispensation maketh the work of God in calling more or less sensible. Those that are brought in by the violent way and roughly, must needs be sensible of that omnipotent pull by which their hearts are divorced from their corruptions, and can discourse of the time, the means, and the manner, and all the circumstances of their calling with exactness: as Paul, 2 Cor. xii. 2, I knew a man in Christ fourteen years ago,' &c. Now, every one cannot deliver a formal story, nor tell you the exact method and successive operations of grace in conversion.

(5.) Though there be a different dispensation used in calling, yet there is enough to distinguish the uncalled from the called; partly because though God's call be not discerned in the acts of it, yet it may be discerned in the effects of it. Conversion is evident, if not in feeling, yet in fruit. Many works of nature are for the convoy of them

insensible, but the effects appear: Eccles. xi. 5, We know not the way of the spirit, nor how the bones grow in the womb.' We know not the manner, point of time, but yet the birth followeth. They are not Christ's that neither know how they are called, nor can give any proof that they are called. The blind man, John ix., when they asked him, How did he come to open thine eyes?' answered, How he did it I cannot tell; but this one thing I know, that whereas I was blind, I now see.' Early or late the soul will give this testimony, How I got him I cannot tell, but I am glad I find he is here. Partly because where conversion and calling is carried on more tacitly or silently, there will be something felt and found in them; there is at least an anxiousness about their everlasting estate. Every soul doth not walk in the region of the shadow of death,' but every soul first or last is brought to What shall I do? which is usually upon some secret or open sin into which God suffereth them to fall against conscience: there will be care, though not horror; and solicitousness, though not utter despair. No soul ever came to Christ without a load upon his back, though every one be not ready, with the jailor, to kill himself for anguish. You will be at a loss sometimes; it is easy security that goeth on from the cradle to the grave in the same tenor of hope without variation. There will be a time when you will smite upon the thigh,' and cry, What shall I do?' And as there will be some trouble found in them, so some change; all are not converted from profaneness to religion, some from civility to religion, from profession to sincerity, from servility to ingenuity.

Time was when they were careless of communion with God, prayed now and then out of custom, had no delight in the Almighty, but now it is otherwise. Partly because there is a constant calling, so that first or last we shall be sensible of the motions of the Spirit, and the heart's answer: to some God speaketh in thunder, to others in a still voice,

but to all he speaketh; therefore did you ever discern God's calling and your answering? Ps. xxvii. 8, The Lord said, Seek ye my face; my heart said, Thy face, Lord, will I seek.' There is no gracious heart but they are often sensible of such a dialogue between God and the soul. This discourse is constant; he speaketh to us by the injection of holy motions and the actual excitations of his grace, and we speak to him by serious promises and resolutions of obedience. God calleth us into his presence often, and the heart echoeth, Lo, I come.'

Well, now, upon all these considerations labour to get your calling evidenced. That will clear up your title to the great privileges of grace. By it you may rebuke your doubts and fears. When conscience asketh, What have you to do with these comforts, to look upon yourselves as objects of God's election, as heirs of glory? you may answer, I did not take this honour upon me. I was called of God. But you will say, What are the infallible notes and marks of effectual calling? I answer--These. I shall contract larger discourses. You may know your effectual calling partly by the preparations made for it. Though the work itself be done in an instant, and many times when we least think of it, yet usually God maketh way for his mighty work. As the husbandman harroweth and breaketh the clods before he throweth in the seed, so by some preparative conviction God breaketh the heart, and maketh it meet to receive grace. Redemption needed no preparation, but conversion doth. Look, as Moses brought them to the borders, but Joshua led them into the land of Canaan, so usually there is some foregoing law work, though we are called properly by the gospel: 2 Thes. ii. 14, Called by my gospel.' The law driveth us out of ourselves, but the gospel pulleth in the heart to Christ. Look, as in outward generation the matter is gradually prepared and disposed, so is the soul for the new birth. A man is awakened by the sight of his own wretchedness,

convinced of sin, and the evil consequences of it; and then the work is done by the mild voice of the gospel, Hosea ii. 14; Gal. iii. 1; as manna came down in sweet dews. It is God's way to speak terror before he speak comfort. Christ showeth the method: John xvi. 8, The Spirit shall convince of sin.' The word elenxei is notable. To convince is to show a thing to be impossible to be otherwise than we represent it.

[10] So the Spirit convinceth, and maketh the person yield, and say, Certainly I am a sinner, an unbeliever, a very wretch, that hath no interest in Christ. This is God's method. We come to some certain issue about our being in the state of nature, before we come to some certain issue about our being in the state of grace. The soul saith, Surely I am stark naught, in a deplored lost condition. Well, then if you had always good thoughts of yourselves, or only a slight and general knowledge, we are all sinners, &c, you are not prepared. The blind man, John ix., could say, I was blind.' Were you ever brought to say, I was a wretch, a miserable, forlorn creature out of Christ? This feedeth presumption and security, because we never bring the debate to an issue concerning our being in either of the states, but content ourselves with blind guesses and loose acknowledgments that we are all sinners, and Christ must save us, &c. This is not enough; there must be a particular and humbling sense of sin. Unworthiness and wretchedness felt is the first occasion to bring us to Christ. Never a poor soul that taketh sanctuary at the throne of grace but he standeth guilty there, Rom. iii. 19; Heb. vi. 18; and in danger of damnation.

2. Again, the next note or occasion of discovery may be taken from the instrument or means by which God hath called us, namely, the word: 2 Thes. 14, By my gospel.' Oracles and audible voices are not his usual course. Some Christians talk of such things, but, to say the least of the mistake, they are but the suppositions of an over-troubled fancy,

delusions which God, who bringeth light out of darkness, may at length order for good, and in the wisdom of his providence make use of them to bring off his people from their discouragements. [11] But usually God's way of calling is by the word, and most usually by the word preached, seldom otherwise; for God loveth to own and honour the means of his own appointing with a blessing. I suppose scarce an instance can be given of any converted by reading or meditation that neglected prophesying where it was to be had. I confess the word may not work always in time of hearing. There is a notable instance, Cant. v. 6, My soul failed when he spake;' or rather, it may be rendered, because of his speech.' Now compare it with the time of Christ's visit, ver. 2, 3, Open, my sister, my dove,' &c. While Christ was speaking she is careless and sluggish, I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on?' You see her heart was far from failing then; but when she remembered it afterward, then her bowels were troubled. As Peter also was wrought upon by the remembrance of Christ's words a great while after they were spoken, Mat. xxvi. 75. Thus many times God reviveth old truths, and maketh them effectual long after the time of delivery. The word worketh, then, either in the hearing or in the remembrance or deep meditation upon it. Well now, can you remember such an experience when God called you by his word, and spake comfortably to your hearts?' Did he ever move you to go aside into the closet, that you might be solitary and serious, and consider of your condition? Usually at our first call we are moved to go aside, that God and we may confer in private; as Hosea ii. 14, God calleth into the wilderness, that he may speak to the heart.' And Ezekiel was called into the field,' that God might more freely talk with him: Ezek. iii. 22, Arise, go forth into the plain, that there I may talk with thee.' So Cant. vii. 11, Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the fields,' &c. Usually his first motions are to go aside

and consider. Christ is bashful before acquaintance, and doth not speak to us in company, but in private. Did he ever thus invite you into secret places? did he ever call thee by name, speak so expressly to thy case, as if he had said, Here is mercy for thee, comfort for thee; here is thy portion? First or last God's children have such experiences. There is a time of loves,' Ezek. xvi. 6, 7, which they cannot forget; at least a time wherein the master of the assemblies' fastened a nail in their hearts. God's people are wont to talk how seasonably and yet how strangely providence cast them upon such opportunities; as David, Ps. cxix. 93, I shall never forget thy precepts, for by them thou hast quickened me.' Oh! I shall never forget such an ordinance, such a sermon, wherein the Lord was pleased to take notice of me, and to speak to my heart. Weak impressions are soon razed out, but powerful effects of the word leave a durable mark and character that cannot be defaced.

3. The next mark may be taken from the formal answer or correspondent act of the creature to the call of God, for that is it which sealeth our election; for otherwise many be called,' but they are not chosen,' unless the heart be prevailed with to obey the call. Yea, the notion of vocation in its full latitude implieth not only God's act, but ours, our answer to his call: Christ's sheep hear his voice.' When Christ saith, Mary,' she answereth, Rabboni,' my Lord, John xx. 16. God's call is the offer of grace, our answer is the accepting of grace offered; there must be receiving as well as offering; vocation is not effectual unless it end in union; it is receiving that giveth us interest, John i. 12. The scriptures do everywhere imply and signify this answerable act of the creature to the call of God. God saith, Seek ye my face,' and the soul, like a quick echo, Thy face, Lord, will I seek,' Ps. xxvii. 8. So Jer. iii. 22, Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal you;' and then, Behold, we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord

our God.' The soul is enabled to do that which it is exhorted to do. God saith, Come to Christ, and the soul saith, Lord, I come. Well, then, is the call obeyed? do you receive Christ for your Lord and Saviour? The proper answer of the call is the consent and full purpose of the heart to take Christ; for offering is the call, and receiving is the answer. Have you subscribed and consented to take Christ upon his own terms? as the prophet, when he was to take a wife, maketh an offer, Hosea iii., I will be for thee, and thou shalt be for me.' Are you content? Christ will be for you in all his graces, merits, benefits, if you will be for him in all your motions, tendencies, aims. Alas! your hearts know that you are for yourselves, lusts, interests, &c.

4. Again, you may know your calling by the concomitant dispositions of the soul that go along with such a return and answer. Wherever Christ is received, he is received with worthy and suitable affections; these are most notable:--(1.) Godly sorrow: Jer. xxxi. 9, They shall come with weeping and supplication, and I will lead them.' It is spoken of the Jews' conversion; when God cometh to lead them, they shall bewail their hardness of heart and unbelief. Such kind of workings there are in the heart of every returning sinner; as, that God should look upon such a worthless creature as I am, that have all this while gainsayed and stood out many an invitation! that ever God should care for such a vile and stubborn wretch! seek to reclaim such a wayward heart! Usually there are such mournful and self-humbling reflections that get the start of faith and comfort, and do more sensibly bewray themselves. Never did any child of God get home to him, but smiting on the thigh, Jer. xxxi. 18, and complaining of themselves before they could take comfort in God. (2.) Holy wonder, which ariseth from comparing their own wretchedness with God's rich mercy in Christ; and therefore the apostle saith, 1 Peter ii. 9, Who hath called us out of darkness into

his marvellous light;' implying that God's grace is most wonderful at first conversion, as light is to a man that cometh out of a dungeon; woful darkness maketh it marvellous light. In this change there is nothing but what is wonderful; both the sweetness and the power of that grace by which it is wrought. The sweetness of grace: When God came to offer Abraham the grace of the covenant, he fell upon his face, Gen. xvii. 3, in a humble adoration and reverence. The power of grace: If Peter wondered at his deliverance by the angel out of that strong prison, we have much more cause to wonder that the yoke is broken, and that we are set free by Christ; the sweet effects of this grace cause wonder: The peace of God, which passeth all understanding,' &c. (3.) A free resolution and confidence; come whatever cometh, they will obey God; as Abraham, being called, obeyed God, not knowing whither he went,' Heb. xi. 8. So when they have a warrant, they will make adventures of faith, though they know not the success; as Peter would cast out the net at Christ's command, though there were little likelihood of taking fish: Howbeit at thy command,' &c., Luke v. 5. So it is unlikely God will receive me to grace, yet I will adventure; I know not what will come of it. Where faith is sensible of a command, it doth not dispute a duty, but accomplish it. The Spirit speaketh to the soul as the disciples did to the blind man, Mark x. 49, Be of good comfort; rise, because the master calleth thee.' I instance in these dispositions because they are most sensible.

5. It may be evidenced by the fruits and effects of a call; the call inferreth a change of the former estate, both in heart and life.

[1.] There will be a change in the whole heart. In the mind and judgment; there the activity of the new nature is first discovered: Eph. iv. 23, Renewed in the spirit of the mind;' in that which is most intimate and excellent there. In our discourse and reason; all the

discourses, debates, purposes, and cares of the soul will be to please God. The mind is made a forge for holy uses, wherein to debate and contrive how to carry on the work of grace, how to glorify God in our relations, concernments; certainly this will be found in all those that are called and converted. So in the will and affections there will be a constant inclination towards God as the chiefest good: Ps. cxix. 57, Thou art my portion, Lord; I have said that I will keep thy words.' The soul is resolved; there is a decree issued forth in that behalf to dedicate itself to God and his will. This is the great difference between men and men in fixing their chiefest good and utmost end. The soul, finding comfort in God, setteth the whole bent of her endeavours towards him. So for the other affections which attend upon the other act of the will, aversion and loathing; a soul that is called and converted hateth sin, its own beloved sin, as the greatest evil: Hosea xiv. 8, What have I any more to do with idols?' Isa. xxx. 22, Thou shalt say to it as to an abominable rag, Get thee hence.' A keen displicency and hearty indignation is kindled in the soul against sin: when God changeth a soul, he putteth a disposition into it somewhat like his own nature. God cannot abide sin, and a sanctified heart cannot abide it; Get thou hence,' &c.; the new life hath an antipathy to that which is contrary to it.

[2.] In the life there will be a change; men will walk worthy their calling, not disgracing it by scandals or unseemly practices: Eph. iv. 1, I beseech you, brethren, walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called;' that is, suitable to the purity, suitable to the dignity of it. When David was a shepherd, he thought of nothing else but keeping his father's sheep; but when God called him to be a shepherd of the people, then he had other projects, and was of other manner of behaviour. A new calling requireth a new conversation: so 1 Thes. ii.

12, Walk worthy of God, who hath called you to his kingdom and his glory.' The divine calling puts an honour upon you: it is not for princes to embrace the dung,' nor for eagles to catch flies; to be vain, voluptuous, carnal, and worldly, as others are: you are called to the fellowship of saints and angels; will it become one of your hopes to drive on such a low design as a worldly interest? If you saw a man labouring in filthy ditches, and soiling himself as poor men do, would you believe that he were heir-apparent to a crown, called to inherit a kingdom? Who will believe your calling when you stick in the mud of pleasures, and are carried on with such a zealous respect after secular interests? The apostle reproveth the Corinthians for walking as men,' 1 Cor. iii. 3. Some walk as beasts, others are of a more civil strain; but this is but as men: you should walk more sublimely, above the ordinary rate of flesh and blood. When Antigonus was going into the house of a harlot, one told him, Thou art a king's son. Oh! remember your dignity, and walk worthy of your high calling; walk as having the world under your feet, with a holy scorn and contempt of sublunary enjoyments. And as you should walk worthy of the dignity of your calling, so of the purity of it: He that hath called you is holy,' 1 Peter i. 15; and your condition is a holy calling,' 2 Tim. i. 9; and the end of your calling is holiness: 1 Thes. iv. 7, God hath called us unto holiness.' All which are so many engagements to urge us to the more care. A filthy, loose conversation will never suit with this calling; you are a shame and a stain to him that calleth you if you walk thus: as some in the prophet are said to pollute God, Ezek. xxxi. 9, namely, as their pollutions were retorted upon God.

Let us now come to the manifestations and effects of this calling; and the first effect mentioned is sanctification, sanctified in God the Father. Where you may note two things:--(1.) The state, sanctified;

(2.) The author of it, by God the Father.

1. The state, egiasme'nois, to them which are sanctified;' instead of which some copies have, egapeme'nois, beloved by God the Father:' but let us keep to our own reading, the other being a mistake, and in few Greek copies. The note is:--

Obs. That God's people, whom he hath called out of the world to himself, are a sanctified people. I shall show you--(1.) What it is to be sanctified; and then (2.) Why God's called people must be sanctified.

First, What it is to be sanctified. There are many acceptions of the term; the most famous are two--to sanctify is either to set apart, or to cleanse. These two notions will be enough for our purpose, if in each of them we suppose both something privative, and something positive; as when it signifieth to set apart, you must conceive not only a setting apart from common use, but a dedication to holy uses, or a setting apart for God, which is the most proper acception of the word. So when it signifieth to cleanse, you must not only conceive a purgation from filthiness, but a plantation of seeds of grace; not only an abolition of natural corruption, but a renovation of God's image. In this method let us a little consider the thing in hand.

1. To sanctify is to set apart and dedicate. Now, God's people are set apart by God, Ps. iv. 3, and they dedicate themselves to his use and service: 2 Tim. ii. 21, Vessels of honour for the master's use.' They are set apart by God both in time and before time. Be fore all time they are set apart by God's decree, to be a holy seed to himself in and by Christ, separated from the perishing world to be vessels of honour; as the reprobate are called vessels of wrath and dishonour;' thus we are said to be chosen to be holy,' Eph. i. 4. But then in time they are regenerated, and actually set apart. Sanctification is an actual

election (as before) by which we are set apart from the perishing world to act for God, and to seek the things that make for his glory. Thus we are called God's first-fruits,' which were the Lord's portion, James i. 18, and is there made a fruit of regeneration. And thus we are said to be a holy priesthood,' 1 Peter ii. 9, the priests being men set apart to minister in God's presence. Now, this consecration inferreth a holy preciseness and singularity in the godly, that they may keep themselves unspotted from the world,' James i. 28, as holy things were to be kept from a common use; [12] and it implieth that every sin is a kind of sacrilege, it stealeth a holy thing from God. But over and above all this, they dedicate themselves, or set apart themselves, by the consent of their own vows: Rom. xii. 1, Present yourselves,' &c., as every man was to bring his own sacrifice; and for this dedication the Lord calleth when he saith, My son, give me thy heart;' because God loveth to put the honour upon us of a gift, when it is but a debt; and because our voluntary consent to this surrender is a necessary fruit of grace, and the immediate effect of his own choice.

2. To sanctify is to cleanse, together with its positive act, to renew and adorn with grace.

Let us first speak of the privative or cleansing work; this notion is necessary to be added to the former. They that are sanctified must not only be separated to a holy use, but must also be cleansed: as to sanctify signifieth to separate, so there is a difference between them and others; and as it signifieth to cleanse, so there is a difference between them and themselves. They differ from others, because they are a people set apart to act and live for God; they trade for God, eat for God, drink for God, more or less, all is for God's glory, 1 Cor. x. 31, and so are a distinct company from the men of the world, who are merely swayed by their own interests, a company that merely act for themselves

in all that they do. And then there is a difference between them and themselves, for sanctification is the cleansing of a thing that was once filthy: 1 Cor. vi. 11, Such were some of you, but now ye are washed, but now ye are sanctified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God;' they are not the same men they were before. We all come into the world polluted with the stain of sin, which is purged and done away by degrees, and at death wholly, and never before. When Christ cometh to bring us to God as the fruits of his purchase, then we are without spot and blemish,' Eph. v. 27. The Papists cavil, yea, trifle, when they argue from that place, that either we must grant a perfection in this life; or a purgation after death, or how else cometh the soul to be without spot and blemish? I answer--That place asserts the thing to the comfort of the elect, that once they shall get rid of the filthy spots of sin; but for the time, most probably in the moment of expiring. As the soul in the very moment wherein it is joined to the body becometh sinful, so in the moment wherein it leaveth the body it is sanctified, and presented by Christ to God; as many pious souls breathe out their last with the profession of this hope. Then we shall be cleansed indeed; now the work is in fieri, it is a-doing. The work of grace for the present consists in rubbing away the old filth, and weakening original corruption more and more; [13] as also in washing off the new defilement which we contract every day by conversing in the world. See John xiii. 10, where our Saviour alludeth to a man that hath been bathing himself, but after his return by treading on the ground again staineth his feet, and needeth another washing, of his feet at least. So by conversing in the world, there are stains and spots contracted, which must always be washed off by daily repentance, besides our general bathing at first conversion or regeneration, Titus iii. 5. I have no more to say to this cleansing work, but only this,

that it is not merely like the washing off of spots, but like the purging of sick matters or ill humours out of the body; it is a work done with much reluctation of corrupt nature, and therefore it is expressed by subduing our iniquities,' Micah vii. 19. In outward filthiness there is no actual resistance, as there is in sin.

But to speak now of the positive work, or the decking and adorning the soul with grace. As the priests under the law, when they came to minister before the Lord, were not only washed in the great laver, but adorned with gorgeous apparel, so to be sanctified is more than to be purified; for besides the expulsion of sin, there is an infusion of grace, a disposition wrought clean contrary to what we had before, therefore called a new heart and a new spirit;' see Ezek. xxxvi. 25-27; from whence also there floweth newness of life and conversation; there is a new heart or conformity to God's nature, and a new life or conformity to God's will. The pattern of that sanctification which is wrought in the heart is God's nature or image, 2 Peter i. 4, Eph. iv. 24; and the pattern of that sanctification which is wrought in the life is God's law or revealed will, 1 Thes. iv. 3; the one is our habitual holiness, and the other our actual.

[1.] For habitual sanctification, or that which is wrought in the heart, I observe, that it is thorough but not full; there must be all grace, and every faculty must be adorned with grace: [14] 1 Thes. v. 23, The very God of peace sanctify you wholly: I pray God your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless until the coming of Jesus Christ.' All of man is made up of spirit, soul, and body; that is the theological distinction of the faculties:--the spirit, that is the more rational and angelical part of the soul, understanding, conscience, will; and then there is soul, the lower part, the more brutish and sensual affections and desires; and then body, the outward man, the

instrument of soul, which needeth to be sanctified, that is, kept in a good order and frame, that it may not rebel, or disobey the motions of the better part. You see, then, every faculty must be seasoned with the new nature; [15] this leaven must get into the whole lump; the mind, memory, conscience, will, desires, delights, all must be brought into conformity to the image of God. And as every faculty must be sanctified, so there must be every grace. In conversion there is introduced into the soul a stock of truth, and a frame of grace, called in other terms the anointing,' 1 John ii. 27, and the seed of God,' 1 John iii. 9. There is a stock of truth brought into the understanding to season that; not that every one that is regenerate doth actually know all truths, but there is a saving light and knowledge of things necessary; they see enough to avoid courses of damnation, and to cleave to the ways of God: and there is an inquisitiveness after truth, and a suitableness to them when they are revealed; they are teachable, though actually ignorant; there is something in their hearts that carrieth a cognation and proportion to every truth, and claimeth kin of it whenever it is revealed. And then there is a frame of grace; for the mind is not only enlightened, but the will and affections are sanctified, and the heart inclined to choose the ways of God, and to obey him whenever occasion is offered. The habits of all grace are brought into the heart by regeneration, as original sin containeth the seeds and habits of all sin: though there be not explicit workings of all graces at that time, yet they are introduced, and make up one sincere bent of the soul towards God, called Holiness in truth,' Eph. vi. 24. Thus you see the new creature doth not come out maimed; the person sanctified hath all the parts of a new man, not one member is wanting. But now though this sanctification be thorough, yet it is not full and complete for degrees; every part is sanctified, but every part

is not wholly sanctified. In the most gracious there is a double principle--hell and heaven, Adam and Jesus, the flesh and the spirit, the law of the members, and the law of the mind. Such a medley and composition are we during the present state! We know but in part,' and we are sanctified but in part, and there being such a mixture in the principles of operation, every action is mixed. It is notable, that there is no commendable act in scripture recorded but there is some mixture of corruption in it, even in the most heroical exercises and discoveries of faith: Moses believeth, and therefore smiteth the rock, but he smiteth twice; Sarah believeth the promise, but giveth her maid to Abraham; Rebecca was told that the elder should serve the younger, and believeth it, but yet she sets Jacob a-work to get the blessing by a wile; Rahab saveth the spies, but maketh a lie, &c. Thus is our wine mingled with water, our honey with wax, Cant. v. 1, and our silver with tin. All the trial is, that the better part prevaileth; and that we are still growing and hasting on to perfection, as the morning sun doth to high noon, Prov. iv. 18.

[2.] For actual sanctification, which standeth in a conformity to God's will, when the heart is changed so as the life, thoughts, words, actions, all are sanctified: there is a spirit of holiness working within, and breathing without, in sanctified discourse and holy exercises; all the actions savour of grace. Now our actions are sanctified and savour of grace when they are performed upon new principles and new ends.

(1.) New principles: Duty swayeth the conscience, and love inclineth the heart, 1 Tim. i. 5, The end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart and good conscience, and faith unfeigned.' No act is gracious and an act of pure obedience, unless it have these qualifications. It is not the matter that maketh the work good, but the

principles: all that we do must come from a principle of faith, love, and obedience. Obedience respects the command, love the kindness and merit of the lawgiver, and faith his bounty and reward: the first swayeth the conscience, the second inclineth the heart, and the third giveth encouragement. This is to do duties with a gospel frame of spirit; obedience takes notice of the laws of God, love of the kindness of God, and faith of the rewards of God; and so obedience showeth us the matter of the duty, and faith the encouragement; so that whatever is done as an act of the new nature or sanctified estate, it is an act of obedience, out of gratitude, upon the encouragement of our glorious hopes and advantages in Christ. As if it be asked, Why do I do it? God hath commanded it, 1 Thes. iv. 3, and v. 18; His will is motive enough; God will have it so. Why with such strength of affection and earnestness? God hath deserved it, because of his love and bounty in Christ, 2 Cor. v. 14, 15; Titus ii. 11-14. Conscience is sensible of the obligation, and love and hope sweetens the duty. There is a natural conscience of good and evil, which is known by legal aims and carnal motives. What is done out of natural conscience is not done out of obedience and thankfulness, but out of bondage, and with a servile frame of spirit; like fruits that are ripened by art and force, not naturally nor kindly.

(2.) New ends. Here indeed the discovery is most sensible; principles are more hidden, and discovered mostly by ends. Now the only end must be God's glory. All that is done in the spiritual life, be it an act of piety, justice, temperance, or charity, it must be done with this aim, that God may be glorified by our obedience to his will: I owe this duty to God, and I must do it for God's sake; be it a duty of worship, or in your civil relation and traffic; as if I pray, the last end of prayer must be God's glory, whether I seek grace and pardon, or the

conveniences and supports of the present life. Grace still sublimateth the intention of the creature, therefore carnal men are taxed for praying out of self-interests: Hosea vii. 14, They have not cried unto me when they howled upon their beds; they assembled themselves for corn, and wine, and oil.' It is but a brutish cry when men seek only their own commodity and welfare; as beasts will howl when they are sensible of any smart and injury; dogs or any brute beasts may do the same; there is no act of grace in it. So in charity, many men make it a kind of bargain and traffic; they do it to be seen of men,' Mat. vi. 2, to gratify their wordly interests, not to please God or honour God, for their credit and repute, to be well thought of; and there Christ saith, misthon auton apechousin, that is, they have that which they look for; for other things they give God a discharge and acquittance. Briefly, the aims of men not regenerate or sanctified are either carnal, or natural, or legal. (1st.) Carnal, when men make a market of religion, their worship, righteousness, and charity is set to sale, and by a vile submission made to stoop to their own private interests; as the Pharisees made long prayers to devour widows' houses, that is, to beget a fame and repute of honesty, that they might be intrusted with the management of their estates. So some may pray to show parts, preach out of envy, and to rival others in esteem, Phil. i. 15. Often is this vile scorn put upon God, that his worship is made a cover and pretence to unclean intents; which is as if a cup of gold, made for a king to drink of, should be filled with excrements; or as if we did set up another god beside him; for that which we make our utmost end, we make it our God; as false teachers are said to make their belly their God,' Phil. iii. 19, because all that they did was for belly cheer, to flow in abundance of wealth and worldly pleasures, by this means setting up the belly, and the concernments of the belly in God's stead. (2d.) There

are natural ends. It is grace, as I said, that sublimateth the intention of the creature. A carnal man can go no higher than self, as water cannot ascend beyond its spring. Now all natural men are not hypocrites, to put on a pretence of strictness out of design: the apostle saith, They do by nature the things contained in the law.' Rom. ii. 14; that is, upon the impulses of natural conscience, they avoid such sins as nature discovereth, upon such arguments and reasons as nature suggesteth. If they worship, it is to satisfy their own consciences; if they be strict and temperate, it is not out of reasons of obedience, but because the matter of carnal pleasure is gross and burdensome, and hindereth the free contemplation of the mind; or because these pleasures emasculate and quench their natural bravery, and so hinder their reputation in the world. If they be just, it is to maintain commerce between man and man; if they be kind in their relations, it is for their own peace and quiet; nothing is done as in and to the Lord, as the apostle enjoineth, Eph. v. God is neither at the beginning nor at the end of any of these actions; the love of God is not their spring and rise, nor the glory of God their aim. If they pray, there is no intention beyond self, and the welfare of their own natures; the matter is but the outward work of the law, ergon nomou, Rom. ii. 15, and their aim is but the freedom and welfare of nature. (3d.) There are legal ends. When wicked men are most devout, it is but to quiet conscience, to satisfy God for their sins by their duties; they would fain buy out their peace with heaven at any rate: Micah vi. 6-8, Wherewith shall I come before him? what shall I give for the sins of my soul?' They are devout, charitable, that by diligence in worship, and exceeding in charity, they may expiate the offences of a carnal life. If peace of conscience were to be purchased with money, they would not spare; they would rather part with anything than their

corruptions, because nothing is so dear to a carnal heart as sin. So that you see devout nature is very corrupt and perverse, and therefore all its actions are justly hated of God: Prov. xxi. 27, The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination; how much more when he offereth it with an evil mind?' that is, to buy an indulgence in other sins, that he may sin them freely and with leave from heaven. In short, all their duties of worship and charity are performed as a sin-offering, and not as a thank-offering; to satisfy God, not to glorify him; usually they are extorted from him in a pang of conscience, as a mariner casts out his goods in a storm, or a traveller yieldeth his money when beset with thieves; there is no true delight in God or in obedience. And thus I have showed you what it is to be sanctified in heart and life, which was the first thing propounded.

Secondly, Let me now show why God's called people must be sanctified, and that briefly and in few words.

1. For the honour of God, of every person in the Trinity, Father, Son, and Spirit. For the honour of the Father, that his choice may not be disparaged: Eph. i. 4, He hath elected us to be holy;' 2 Thes. ii. 14, Chosen to the sanctification of the Spirit.' There is some conscience in the world that maketh them adore strictness; mere morality hath some majesty with it in the eye of nature, but especially gospel holiness; whereas looseness is looked upon with scorn and contempt; so that his chosen people would be a dishonour to him if they were not sanctified. Therefore God the Father aimeth at it in all his dispensations; he chooseth us that we may be of a choice spirit. As when Esther was chosen out among the virgins, she was purified and decked with ornaments, and had garments given her out of the king's wardrobe, so we are made holy, being chosen of God. And then he calleth us, that he may put this honour upon us in the eye of the world, to make us like

himself: Be ye holy, as he that hath called us is holy,' 1 Peter i. 15. It were monstrous that God should set his affections upon a people altogether unlike him; [16] that he should call them to be so near himself that continue corrupt and carnal. It is the aim of his providences as well as his special grace; we are afflicted that we may be partakers of his holiness,' Heb. xii. 10; threshed that our husk may fly off. God certainly delighteth not in the afflictions of his people; no, he loveth the prosperity of the saints,' Ps. xxxv. 27, but he had rather see them in any condition than see them sinful. Again, it is for the honour of God the Son, whose members we are. Head and members must be all of a piece, like one another. It were monstrous that Christ should have such a body as Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream, where the head was of pure gold, and the thighs brass, and the feet iron, &c.; and it were an odd sight that a face of Europe should be put upon the body of a negro or Ethiopian; and as strange and odd it is that Christ should have a disproportioned body, quite unlike himself; yea, it is little for his honour that he should be the head of an ulcerous body, as well as a monstrous body. So much of sin as you continue, so much you disparage your Redeemer and put him to shame; therefore all Christ's aim is to make us holy; for that end he redeemed us, that he might sanctify us, and make us a glorious church, without spot and wrinkle, Eph. v. 26, 27. When Christ was upon the cross, in the height of his love, he was devising what he should do for his church to make her honourable and glorious, and he pitched upon sanctification as the fittest blessing that he could bestow upon us. Every distinct society must have some distinct honour and privilege; now Christ had set apart the church as a distinct society to himself, and therefore he would not bestow upon her pomp and worldly greatness--other societies had enough of that--but holiness, grace, which is our splendour and ornament: Ps.

xciii. 5, Holiness becometh thy house, O Lord, for ever.' And indeed this was a far better gift than any outward greatness and excellency could be; for moral excellences are far better than civil and natural. It is God's own honour to be holy, therefore it is said that he is glorious in holiness,' Exod. xv. 11. He is elsewhere said to be rich in mercy.' Rom. x. 12; Eph. ii. 4; but here, glorious in holiness.' His treasure is his goodness, but that which he accounts his honour is his holiness or immaculate purity; as you know among men their wealth is distinguished from their honour. But in this gift Christ hath not only respect to the excellency of it, but to our need and want. Christ was then repairing and making up the ruins of the fall. Now we lost in Adam the purity of our natures as well as the favour of God; therefore, that the plaster might be as broad as the sore, he would not only reconcile us to God, but sanctify us; his blood was not only lu'tron, a price, but lou'tron, a laver, wherein to Wash us and make us clean: as under the law there was in the tabernacle a great laver as well as an altar, to show we must be washed and sanctified as well as reconciled to God; and Christ came not only to abolish the guilt of sin, which is against our interest, our peace and comfort, but also to destroy the power of sin, which is against God's glory. And as this was Christ's aim in redemption, so also in the gospel, and all the precious promises of it: he died that ordinances might be under a blessing, and conduce to the promotion of holiness; for so it is there in Eph. v. 26, That he might sanctify us by the washing of water through the word.' There is a treasure of grace purchased, and left in the church to be conveyed to us by the use of these ordinances. So John xvii. 19, I sanctify myself for their sakes, that they may be sanctified through the truth.' Whenever we come to the word, or enjoy the use of the seals, we may expect to reap the fruits of Christ's purchase. Celsus objected against

Christianity that it was a sanctuary for villains and men of a licentious life. Origen answered him, that it was not a sanctuary to nourish them in their evil practices, but an hospital to cure them. As under the law all the cities of refuge were cities of Levites and schools of instruction, so Christ hath made the church a school wherein to learn the trade of holiness; and the word and the seals, and all the ordinances, look that way. Lastly, it is for the honour of God the Spirit that the called people should be holy, because they are his charge, in pupilage to the Holy Ghost, for this end and reason, that they may be sanctified. Sanctification is made his personal operation: The sanctification of the Spirit,' 2 Thes. ii. 14, and 1 Peter i. 2. He is to shape and fashion all the vessels of glory, to deck the spouse of Christ with the jewels of the covenant. This is the great advantage that we have in the economy and dispensation of grace, that we have God to purpose it, God to purchase it, and God to work it; the Father, Word, and Spirit, who agree in one, to sanctify the creature and make it holy. Now it is a great grief to the Spirit when the work doth not go on and prosper in the soul; for he worketh us to this very thing,' and is therefore called the Spirit of holiness.' It is not for his honour to dwell in defiled temples, and to let the called people go naked and without their ornament. Well, then, you see, God, for his honour's sake, will have his purposes accomplished for which he chose us, and Christ his purchase made good, and the Spirit who is left in charge to see all accomplished, he goeth on with the work.

2. Another reason why we must be sanctified is, because of the hopes to which we are called and the happiness which we expect. Now we cannot have it unless we be holy: Heb. xii, 14, Without holiness no man shall see God.' We are bidden in that verse to follow peace,' but chiefly holiness;' for it is not said that without peace no man shall see God.

[17] Peace may be often broken in the quarrel of truth and holiness, and so God's children may be passively men of contention. Ay! but for all that they shall see God: but those that are not holy he cannot endure their presence, and therefore they shall never see his face, and enjoy him hereafter. Usually by a fond abuse we restrain the word saints to the saints departed. Ay! but we must be saints here, or else we shall never be saints hereafter. I mean true saints; for by another abuse the word saints is made matter of pretence in some, and matter of scorn by others; but to be saints indeed, that is all the evidence you have to show for your interest in your glorious hopes. What should others do with heaven that are not saints? How can they see God that have not a pure eye? A dusky glass cannot represent the image: the degree of vision is according to the degree of sanctification. [18] And what should a carnal heart, that knoweth no other heaven but to eat, drink, and sleep, and wallow in sensual delights, do with the inheritance of the saints in light?' The apostle saith, we must be made meet' for such a state, Col. i. 12. The vessels of glory are first seasoned with grace. Alas! otherwise carnal men can no more tell what to do with heaven than swine with pearls. We do not look for a Turkish paradise, but a sinless state; not to bathe our souls in carnal pleasures, but to be consorts of the immaculate Lamb. Our hopes engage us to holiness: 1 John iii. 3, He that hath this hope purifieth himself, as Christ is pure.' If his heart be fastened upon such a hope as to see Christ as he is, and to be like him both for temper of soul and state of body, certainly he must needs be a holy man; he will be practising and trying here upon earth how he can conform to Christ, and begin his happiness as well as he can. Certainly he that expecteth that his body shall be like to Christ's glorious body,' he will possess his vessel in sanctification and in honour.' He cannot use his body, that

is under so great hopes, merely as a strainer for meats and drinks, and a channel for lust to pass through; his mind, that shall see God, he cannot fill it with chaff, or suffer it to be occupied with vanity, toying thoughts, and vile cares and unworthy projects; and his affections, that should cleave to God inseparably, to be prostituted to every base object. Thus, with respect to our hopes, we must be sanctified; the foundation and seed of glory is laid in grace, and that life begun which we must live for ever.

Use 1. It serveth for conviction. If God's people are a sanctified people, then here is but sad news for two sorts of persons. (1.) The profane, that care not for holiness; God hath no birthright for such Esaus; the portion of the Lord are a holy portion, but these have a spot that is not as the spot of his children,' Deut. xxxii. 5. See what John speaketh of such persons as wallow in their filthiness: 1 John iii. 8, He that committeth sin is of the devil, for the devil sinneth from the beginning,' o poion amarti'an, he that tradeth in sin, and maketh it his work and business. You may presume that you belong to God, but you are of the devil; you have not, indeed, the least pretence of a claim, and do not go so far as hypocrites, being so little careful to be holy, that you are not moral. Are you called? from what? where is the least evidence of it? Ay! but our hearts are better than we show for. [19] This is to appeal to a witness that cannot be found; it is all one as if a man should claim to another's land, and pretend that he hath lost the evidences. Your guilt is written in legible characters, that he that runneth may read it. (2.) It convinceth persons that scoff at holiness. Scoffing is the overflow of gall and malice, and a black mark, let it be found where it will. In the general it argueth a bad spirit, but especially when religion is made a byword and a reproach. When you deride men for their holiness, you deride them for that which

is the express image of the glorious God, and so deride God himself. Holy brethren, as the saints are styled, Heb. iii. 1, should no more be a disgrace than holy Father, as God himself is styled, John xvii. 11. You hate God more than you do the saints, if you hate them for their holiness, which shineth in them with a faint lustre, but is infinitely and originally in God. Take heed of the chair of scorners.' Those are dogs that are without, Rev. xxii. 15, that bark at the splendour of God's image, that make saints a word of disgrace. Scoffing Ishmaels that will be mocking are sure to be cast out, Gen. xxi. 9; they do not belong to God. The apostle interprets that mocking to be persecution, Gal. iv. 27; so it is in God's account; and yet it is always found in those that are born after the flesh,' Profane spirits think religion a matter of nothing; and men are wont to mock at those which make a great matter of what they account nothing. Oh! remember, holiness is the badge of those which are the Lord's called people, and it should be a matter of reverence, not reproach.

Use 2. Again, it serveth for caution, to prevent mistakes. Christians, look to your sanctification: Ps. iv. 3, Know that God hath set apart him that is godly for himself.' The beast's worshippers have the beast's mark, Rev. xiii. 16. So also God's children are stamped with his seal and impress: 2 Tim. ii. 19, The foundation of the Lord standeth sure, having this seal,' &c., they are sealed with a mark of preservation, The Lord knows those that are his;' and they are sealed with a mark of distinction, Let every one that nameth the name of God depart from iniquity.' As Cain is stamped on both sides, so hath God's seal a double motto--one that noteth his owning the saints, the other that noteth their temper and disposition; they depart from iniquity. Take heed, then, have you this seal and impress? There are many things that look like sanctification, but are not. I shall touch upon

four--civility, formality, restraining grace and temporary grace.

1. Civility, which is nothing else but a fair demeanour in the world, or, in the apostle's expression, a fair show in the flesh,' a darker representation of holiness, rather heathenish strictness than Christian. You may descry it by these notes:--(1.) It is usually accompanied with ignorance, and little knowledge of God's institutions. Men live well, are no drunkards, no swearers, but know little of God, have no insight in matters of religion; like Nicodemus, a strict Pharisee, but grossly ignorant, John iii. 10. Spiritual life beginneth with knowledge, and endeth in a rational strictness, and what they do, they do upon principles. Conscience is swayed by the acknowledgment of God's will. Others live plausibly, but know not the ground and reason of their actions, and therefore are soon satisfied; never troubled about imperfections, because where there is no light there is not that tenderness which is found in real Christians, who look into the purity of the law, and are troubled because they know so much of the will of God, and do so far come short of it, as in a clear glass the least mote is soon espied. (2.) There is little of Christ in such souls; for a man that is satisfied with his own righteousness doth not prize Christ. Paul, a Pharisee, counted his works gain,' which afterward he found to be loss,' Phil. iii. 7. By gain he meaneth an advantage to procure the favour of God. Self is wont to take up all their thoughts, and therefore moral strains suit more with them than gospel comforts, and doctrines that breed faith. The law is more natural to men than the gospel, and therefore with those that are of a moral disposition, and no more, it findeth better entertainment and welcome than the gospel doth. There is no hungering and thirsting' after Christ; they do not see the need of the sweetness of his grace, of the help of his Spirit, going on in a plausible, moral course, without rub or difficulty.

Whereas, in the spiritual life, Christ doth all, and every day they see more cause to bless God for him, Gal. ii. 20. (3.) Usually there is some great prevailing sin. Civility is but a freer slavery; one way or another Satan holdeth them captive, and their honesty and fair show to the world is but to serve their carnal interests, to hide a lust or feed a lust, and most commonly this sin is worldliness. Christ's young man, that had kept all those things from his youth,' had great possessions,' and they were a great snare to his heart, Mat. xix. 22. The sin of the Pharisees was vainglory and ambition. Some morsel there is reserved under the tongue, some sin kept with the greater allowance from conscience, and the less shame from abroad, because otherwise the life is fair and honest. (4.) There is a greater care about actions than lusts. Wrath, and pride, and wanton thoughts, are digested, because there is no violence and uncleanness in the conversation. Civility is all for the carriage, nothing for tempering the affections to such an order and moderation as becometh grace. Paul complaineth of his lusts, and the law of sin within, Rom. vii.; yea, of such sinful workings as do not fall under the cognisance and discovery of the light of nature, Rom. vii. 7, the first risings and stirrings of sin forbidden in the tenth commandment, the least rebellion of nature. Thus for civility.

2. Formality, or pretended grace: you may be deceived in that; and therefore the apostle speaketh Of a true holiness,' en hosioteti tes aletheias, Eph. iv. 24, in opposition to that which is feigned and counterfeit. Now, false grace is always acted by foreign and external considerations; as pupils [20] have not a principle of life within them, but are moved by an external force. The hypocrite's principles of motion are without him, as carnal respects, self-ends, &c. True grace hath an inward propensity to comply with the will of God; there is a

law upon their bowels;' [21] by-ends work by constraint, and carry the soul contrary to its native inclination; a man would not do such a thing, were it not for such ends; therefore the apostle saith, 1 Peter v, 2, Feed the flock that is among you, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind.' When a man acteth genuinely in a work; his own heart carrieth him to it more than all outward encouragements. Again, false grace is shy of God's presence and sight: pretences are to deceive men; therefore such persons strive to get God out of their thoughts, they know his eye will find them out. But now truth of grace is ready to draw everything into God's sight; though they tremble to think what defects God can find in them, yet they appeal to him for the sincerity of their hearts: John xxi. 17, Lord, thou knowest all things, and thou knowest that I love thee.' He would not excuse miscarriages; yet, for the general temper and bent of his heart, he referreth himself to God's omnisciency. So Job xxxi. 6, Let me be weighed in an even balance, that God may know mine integrity;' and yet elsewhere he saith, Job xlii. 5, 6.' Mine eye seeth thee, and therefore I abhor myself in dust and ashes,' in the one place he appealeth to God, for he was confident that his integrity would hold weight; and yet in the other he could even loathe himself when he thought of God, because of so many defects and failings. So David, Ps. cxxxix. 23, Search me, O Lord, and know my heart,' &c. No doubt David was sensible that God could find enough in him; but Lord, search, see if anything be allowed with full leave of conscience. Again, false grace doth not grow, unless it be worse and worse. Pretences wither rather than thrive: God complaineth, Jer. vii. 24, that they went backward rather than forward.' False grace is always declining till it be wholly lost; like bad salt, that loseth of its acrimony and smartness every day till it be cast to the dunghill. But now true

grace, from a grain it groweth into a tree, Mat. xiii., from a morning glimpse to a perfect noon, Prov. iv. 18, from smoking flax it is blown up into a flame. The least meal in the barrel, and oil in the cruse, when it is fed with a supply from heaven, shall prosper into abundance. Nicodemus, that at first came to Christ by night, after boldly declareth himself for him, John xix. 39. Grace gets ground upon the flesh, and holiness by degrees advanceth into a triumph. Examine, then, whether you increase or decrease: if you go backward from zeal to coldness, from strictness to looseness; if you lose your care of duty, and choiceness of spirit, and there be no complaining, it is a sign grace was never wrought in truth. Once more, false grace is not accompanied with humility. When men, the more they profess, the prouder they grow, and more self -conceited, there is cause of suspicion. With true grace there always goeth along a spiritual poverty, or a sense of our spiritual wants; the more knowledge, the more they discern their ignorance; compare 1 Cor. viii. 2, with Prov. xxx. 2, 3; the more faith, the more they bewail unbelief, and see a need of increase and further growth: Mark ix. 24, Lord, I believe, help mine unbelief.' Oh! I want faith, what shall I do? still I am haunted with prejudicial and lessening thoughts of God's all-sufficiency and goodness. It is excellent when the soul is thus kept hungry and humble under our enjoyments, and we forget the things that are behind,' because the things that are before us,' or not yet attained, are much more, Phil. iii. 13.

3. The next thing is restraining grace, [22] which is nothing else but an awe upon the conscience, inclining men to forbear sin, though they do not hate it. Now you may discern it, partly because love is of little use and force with such kind of spirits; they are chained up by their own fears. The great evangelic motive is mercy: Rom. xii. 1, I

beseech you by the mercies of God.' The heart is most ingenuous when it yieldeth to such entreaties. It is good to serve God with reverence, but a servile awe hath little of grace in it. It is true, in deed, it is better to have a slavish fear than none at all; therefore David saith to them that would be held in with no other restraints, Ps. iv. 4, Stand in awe, and sin not.' To cool and charm their fury he maketh use of the argument of God's vengeance; though this is also the fault of slavish spirits, that carnal respects and thoughts of outward inconvenience do equally sway them, as a servile fear of God's judgments. Again, you may know it, because it doth not destroy sin, but only prohibit the exercise of it. Abimelech's lust was not quenched, yet God withheld him from sinning against Sarah, Gen. xx. 6. The heart is not renewed, though the action be checked; as Israel had an adulterous heart towards God, when her way was hedged up with thorns,' Hosea ii. 6. Again, it is their trouble that they are held in the stocks of conscience; they would fain be enlarged and find out their own paths.

4. The next thing that looketh like sanctification, but is not, is common grace. This is a distinct thing from all the rest, yet I call it common grace, because it may be in them that fall away and depart from God. It differeth from civility, because it is more Christian and evangelical; from formality, because that is only in pretence and show, whereas this is a real work upon the soul; from restraining grace, because that is only conversant about sins and duties out of a servile awe of God, but this seemeth to carry out the soul with some affection to Christ. It is a common work, good in itself, which God ordaineth in some to be a preparation and beginning of the work of grace. Of this the apostle speaketh, Heb. vi. 4, 5, where he calleth it an enlightening,' a taste of Christ and of the powers of the world to

come,' and a partaking of the Holy Ghost;' meaning the gifts of the Spirit, abilities for holy duties, &c., of all which elsewhere; only now let me note three things:--(1.) That the light there spoken of is not humbling; (2.) The taste is not ravishing, and drawing out the soul after more of Christ; (3.) Their gifts are not renewing and sanctifying.

[1.] That light is not humbling. He saith, they are enlightened,' but he doth not say they are humbled. Foundations totter that are not laid deep enough. The more true light a man hath, the more cause of self-abasement will he find in himself. You can never magnify Christ enough, and you can never debase self enough; and certainly Christ is most exalted when you are most abased, Isa. ii. 19. Dagon must fall upon his face if you mean to set up the ark; and if Christ shall be precious to you, you must be vile in your own eyes; none have such true revivings as the humble, Isa. lvii. 15, 16. True humiliation is far from weakening your comforts, it maketh them more full and sure; therefore a main thing that was wanting in those spoken of in Heb. vi., was humiliation, and their fault was a rash closing with Christ in the pride of their hearts.

[2.] Their taste was not ravishing and affecting the heart so as to engage it to seek after Christ; they had but loose and slight desires of happiness, glances upon the glory of heaven and the comforts of the gospel, which possibly might stir up a wish, Oh! that I might die the death of the righteous,' &c. They were not serious and holy desires after Christ, after grace and strength to serve him. The saints, that have a taste, groan after a fuller communion in his graces as well as comforts, Rom. vii. 24, Ps. cxix. 5; that experience which they have had of Christ maketh them long for more. But now in temporaries there is a loose assent and slight affection, a taste enough to prevail with

them, to make some profession for a while, a rejoicing for a season, &c.

[3.] Their gifts are not renewing and sanctifying; such possibly as may make them useful to the church, but do not change the heart. The apostle saith, they were made partakers of the Holy Ghost;' that is, had some share--it may be a plentiful share,--of church gifts, so as to be able to carry on duties to the edification and comfort of others. But, alas! what is a man the better, if the heart be oppressed with sins in the meantime, and be not upright with God? 1 Cor. xiii. 1, Though I speak with the tongues of men and angels, and have not charity, I am become but as a sounding brass and tinkling cymbal.' Though you can speak of the things of God with much enlargement and affection, pray sweetly, all is but as tinkling with God, if there be not saving grace. It is a great evidence that we are such as the apostle speaketh of, when the affection doth not answer the expression of a duty, nor the life our knowledge, and gifts have not a proportionable influence upon practice. So much for that point.

Having spoken of the state, I come now to speak of the author of it, God the Father. But why is it so distinctly attributed to the Father? Is not Christ our sanctification?' 1 Cor. i. 30, and is it not called the sanctification of the Spirit?' 2 Thes. ii. 13. The answer shall draw out the strength of the phrase in these propositions. (1.) It is true that the whole Trinity, one way or other, concurreth to the work of holiness; those works ad extra are indivisa, common to all the persons--the Father sanctifieth, the Son sanctifieth, and the Holy Ghost sanctifieth: the same may be said of preserving and calling. (2.) Though all work jointly, yet there are distinct personal operations, by which they make way for the glory of each other; the love of the Father for the glory of the Son, and the glory of the Son for the power of the

Spirit. See how the scripture followeth these things. You shall find first, that no man cometh to the Son, but from the Father, by election: John vi. 37, All that the Father giveth me shall come to me:' so ver. 65, No man cometh unto me, unless it be given him of my Father,' Look again and you shall find that no man cometh to the Father from the bondage of sin and Satan, but by the Son, through his redemption and mediation: John xiv. 6, I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me.' Again, you shall see no man is united to the Son but by the Holy Ghost, who worketh in those whom the Father did choose, and the Son redeem; and therefore the sanctification of the Spirit' is as necessary as the blood of Jesus,' 1 Peter i. 2. So that you see all have their distinct work; the inchoation is from the Father, the dispensation by the Son, and the consummation by the Spirit: from the Father, in the Son, and through the Spirit. There is God's choice, Christ's purchase, and the Spirit's application; all are joined in one verse,--for indeed they must not be severed,--even in the place last alleged, 1 Peter i. 2. (3.) Because the first distinct operation is the Father's, therefore the whole work in scripture is often ascribed to him. He is said to justify;' the justifier of them that believe in Jesus,' Rom. iii. 26. So he is said elsewhere to purge: John xv. 1, 2, I am the vine, and my Father is the husbandman; he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.' All dependeth upon the decree of his love. Christ doth not work upon a person, unless he be given to him by the Father; and, therefore, he being first in order and operation, the whole work is made his work: Sanctified in God the Father.' Observe:--

Obs. 1. That sanctification is God's work, wrought in us by the Father. To cleanse the heart is beyond the power of the creature; it can no more make itself holy, than make itself to be. We could defile

ourselves, but we cannot cleanse ourselves: as the sheep can go astray of itself, but it can never return to the fold without the shepherd's care and help. [23] Lusts are too hard for us, and so are the duties of obedience. God, that gave us his image at first, must again plant it in the soul. [24] Who can repair nature depraved, but the author of nature? When a watch is out of order we send it to the workman: We are his workmanship in Christ,' Eph. ii. 10. God taketh it to his prerogative: Lev. xxi. 8, I am the Lord that sanctifieth thee.' Grace is his immediate creature; man's will contributeth nothing to the work but resistance and rebellion; and outward means work not, unless God put in with them; else why should the same word preached by the same minister work in some and harden others? All the difference ariseth from God's grace, which acteth according to pleasure. Well, then:--

Use 1. Let us wait upon God till the work be accomplished. Our wills are obstinate and perverse, but God never made a creature too hard for himself; he is able to do this thing for us, and it is our comfort we have such a God to go to. The heathens, that groped and felt after God, were to seek of a power to quell their lusts, and therefore were put upon sad remedies: whereas all is made easy to you in the power of God through Christ. Crates gave this advice to one that came to him to know how he should subdue the lust of uncleanness; he answered, that he should either famish himself or hang himself; [25] they knew no remedy but offering violence to nature, or else death and despair. Democritus blinded himself, because he could not look upon women without lusting after them. Now God teacheth us to put out the eye of our lust, not of our bodies. [26] Bless God that you know whose work it is, and to whom to go for sanctification.

Use 2. Praise the Lord whenever this work is accomplished. Not I, but grace; it must not be ascribed to our works, or to any power that is in

ourselves, but to God's mercy, Christ's merits, and the Spirit's efficacy. There is God's grant: To her it was granted to be covered with fine linen, the righteousness of the saints,' Rev. xix. 8. God the Father giveth leave or issueth forth an authentic act and decree in the court of heaven; as Esther by the grant of the king was supplied out of the king's wardrobe. Then there is Christ's merit; the stream wherein we are washed floweth out of Christ's own heart: 1 John i. 7, The blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin.' Then there is the Spirit's efficacy; no less power will vanquish the proud heart of man. It is notable, that grace is expressed not only by the notion of creation, Ps. li. 10; Eph. ii. 10; 2 Cor. iv. 6, which is a making things out of nothing, but also by victory, Luke xi. 21, 22; 2 Cor. x. 5; 1 John iv. 4, or a powerful overcoming of opposition. In creation, as there was nothing to help, so there was nothing to resist and hinder; but in man there is, besides a death in sin, a life of resistance against grace; therefore sanctification must entirely be ascribed to God: we deserve it not, it cometh from the Father's good-will and Christ's merit; we work it not, it is accomplished by the power of the Holy Ghost

Obs. 2. Again observe, that though the work of grace be immediately wrought by another person, yet our thoughts in believing must not stay till we ascend and come up to God the Father. You shall see the scripture carrieth out our acts of faith to him everywhere: Rom. iv. 24, If we believe in him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead;' that is, in God the Father. So John xii. 44, He that believeth in me, believeth not in me, but in him that sent me.' That not is not negative, but corrective. Not only in me, but his thoughts must ascend to the Father also, who manifesteth himself in me. So John xiv. 1, Ye believe in God, believe also in me.' Both expressions may be imperative. Besides believing in Christ, we must also believe in God,

as the first fountain and author of grace. Now the reasons are--(1.) Because all grace beginneth with the Father. The first in order of being is first in order of working. It is the Father that floweth out to us in Christ and by the Spirit. Whatever Christ hath and is, he hath from him as the original author: 1 Cor. i. 30, Of him Jesus Christ is made to us sanctification.' The high priest went into the sanctuary before he blessed the people. So doth Jesus Christ sanctify you in the Father and from the Father. As Mediator certainly he is to be considered as God's servant and instrument. Well, then, reason is in its progress till it climb up to the first cause of a thing. So should faith. Do not leave till you come to the Father, who is the highest fountain of grace. (2.) Because whatever is done to you by Christ, is done with a respect to his Father's love: John xvii. 2, Thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.' So see ver. 6, I have manifested thy name unto them; thine they were, and them thou gavest me.' That was the ground of Christ's respect, the Father's donation, or the charge he received from him; and therefore you must look upon the Father's love as well as Christ's care; for in all his respects to us he still acknowledgeth his obedience to the Father, and, indeed, it giveth us a double ground of hope. The Son loveth us because the Father required it, and the Father loveth us because the Son asketh it. [27] If Christ be faithful to his Father, we are sure to be loved, or if the Father have any respect and love to Christ. (3.) Because it is a great support and comfort to faith to consider of the Father in the act of believing. Two are better than one; and it is often made a privilege to have the Father and the Son,' 1 John i. 3, and ii. 23, 24; 2 John 9., et alibi. There is the Father's love and the Son's merit. Either severally will not yield that joy and peace in believing, and therefore it is good to have them both

together. There is no access to the Father but in the Son. What will guilt do with justice? stubble with consuming fire? God out of Christ is terrible rather than comfortable. Therefore it is said, 1 Peter i. 21, that by him we believe in God;' that is, by Christ through his merit we come comfortably to pitch upon God the Father. So again, Christ separate from the Father doth not yield such firm grounds of confidence. There must be some act of the Father to give us full security: for in the business of redemption God the Father is represented as the offended, wronged party, who is to receive satisfaction. We are sensible of the wrong and offence; conscience feeleth that. We must be also sensible of his favour and grace towards us. Now when we see him first in all acts of grace, that taketh away all jealousy and scruple. (4.) Because in the Father's love there are many circumstances which are very engaging to the soul, which are not to be found in the rest of the divine persons; for he being first in order, hath the chiefest work ascribed to him; but especially are not to be found in Christ as Mediator. And because Christ as Mediator is most known to the creatures, I shall prosecute this matter with respect to that consideration. (1st.) In the Father's love and acts of grace there is an original fulness. Christ's fulness as Mediator is but derived out of the Father's plenty: Col. i. 19, It pleased the Father that in him all fulness should dwell.' And it is limited by the Father's will in the dispensation of it. All that Christ dispensed was according to the charge and commandment given him by his Father. See Mat. xx. 23, It is not mine to give, save to those for whom it is prepared of my Father.' Christ doth not deny his authority to give glory as well as grace; only he showeth how in all the dispensations proper to the Mediator he was limited by the will and counsel of the Father. And so he denieth to dispense the knowledge of times and

seasons, because the Father had kept it in his own power,' Acts i. 7. So that now it is an engaging consideration to remember that the Father, whose will is absolute, who hath an original fulness of all grace, that he himself loveth us,' and is first in all acts of blessing. (2d.) In the Father's acts you have the purest and freest apprehension of love. He began and first broke the business of our redemption. God the Son can have a higher motive, the Father's will; but God the Father can have no higher motive than his own love. His elective law was the first rise and spring whence all that love that passeth out to the creature issueth forth, and therefore here we have the freest apprehension of love. There was a love of the Father anteceding the merit of Christ: John iii. 16, God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son.' There was the most independent and free act of love.

Use. It serveth to press us to give a distinct glory in believing to God the Father. Get a right apprehension of the divine persons, and the several endearments with which their personal operations are represented. It is said, John v. 23, that God will have all men honour the Son as they honour the Father.' God is most honoured when your thoughts are most distinct and explicit in this matter. Do not forget the Father; you are his gift, as well as the Son's purchase, and the Spirit's charge. If God the Father had not loved you before all worlds, Jesus Christ would not have redeemed you; and if Christ had not redeemed you, the Spirit would never sanctify you: and as the Spirit will not work unless you look upon him as Christ's Spirit, John xvi. 14, He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine;' so Christ came to glorify the Father, and to finish his work, John xvii. 4. Bless them and praise them all then. If you receive anything, see the Father's bounty in it, the freeness and everlastingness of his love stamped upon

what you have. So if you want anything, holiness, comfort, grace, pardon, reflect not only upon the fulness of Christ's merit, but the freeness of the Father's love. You deal with a God of bowels and bounty; Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, all are yours. There is a fond affectation in some to carry all things in the name of Christ, even such acts wherein the Father is most concerned; as the former age carried all dispensations in the name of God Almighty, without any distinct reflection, upon God the Son, in whom the Father will be honoured, and by whom we have an access to the Father. So many in this age, in their popular discourses and prayers, carry all things in the name of God the Son, and with a fond and luscious affectation ingeminate the name, Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ,' so that the honour and adoration due to the other persons is neglected and forgotten; whereas Christ is to be acknowledged Lord in all tongues, and among all nations, to the glory of God the Father,' Phil. ii. 11.

But now it is high time to proceed to the second and last manifestation of their effectual calling, preserved in Jesus Christ, teteremenois en Chri'sto, kept in or by him; the meaning is, they were not only sanctified for the present out of the store and plenty of God the Father, but should for ever be kept in that estate by Jesus Christ. The point is:--

Obs. That God's called and sanctified people are preserved and kept in their state of grace and holiness in and by Jesus Christ. The point asserteth two things--that they are kept by Christ and in Christ; that is, not only for his sake, but by virtue of union with him. Jesus Christ is the cabinet wherein God's jewels are kept; so that if we would stand, we must get out of ourselves, and get into him, in whom alone there is safety. I might handle this latter branch apart, namely, that union with Christ is the ground of our safety and preservation.

But because I am sensible that I have staid too long upon this verse already, I shall content myself with handling upon this occasion the general doctrine of the perseverance of the saints. And, first, I shall give you the state of it, how far we may expect to be preserved; Secondly, The grounds of certainty and assurance in this kind.

1. How far we may look for preservation. The doctrine of perseverance is much impugned; but the earth is never the more unsettled because to giddy brains it seemeth to run round. However, let us grant what must be granted, and then the truth will be burdened with less prejudice. Seeming grace may be lost: Take from him that which he hath,' Mat. xxv. 29, is, Luke viii. 18, Take from him that which he seemed to have.' Blazing comets and meteors are soon spent, and fall from heaven like lightning, while stars keep their orb and station. A building in the sand will totter, and hypocrites be discovered before the congregation, Prov. xxvi. 26. Again, initial or preparative grace may fail, such as is spoken of in Heb. vi. 4, 5, to wit, illumination, external reformation, temporary faith, devout moods, some good beginnings, &c. Plenty of blossoms do not always foretell store of fruit; some die in the very pangs of the birth, and are still-born. Yet again, true grace may suffer a shrewd decay, but not an utter loss; the leaves may fade when the root liveth. In temptations God's children are sorely shaken; their heel may be bruised, as Christ's was, but their head is not crushed. Peter denied Christ, but did not fall from grace; there is a remaining seed, 1 John iii. 9. It is notable what Chrysostom observeth concerning Christ's prayer for Peter, Luke xxii. 32, I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not.' Mark, saith he, he doth not say, I have prayed for thee that thou shouldst not deny me, but I have prayed that thy faith should not altogether vanish and be abolished. [28] Once more, such grace as serveth to our well-being in Christ may be taken

away, joy, peace, cheerfulness, &c. As a man may have a being, though his well-being be lost; he is a man, though a bankrupt, though poor, though sick, though diseased: so a Christian may be living though he be not lively. Yet further, the operations of grace may be obstructed for a great while: a fit of swooning is not a state of death; there may be no acts, and yet their seed remaineth; this may last for a long time. David lay in a spiritual swoon nine months; for he awaked not till Nathan came to him, Ps. li., the title; and when Nathan came to him, the child begotten upon Bathsheba was born; for he saith, 2 Sam. xii. 14, The child which is born to thee shall die.' Yet further, grace if left to us would soon be lost; we showed that in innocency: but it is our advantage that our security lieth in God's promises, and not our own; that we are not our own keepers; that grace is a jewel not trusted but in safe hands; that perseverance is God's gift, not man's act; and that Christ hath a charge to conduct the saints, and keep them safe to everlasting glory, John vi. 37-40; and x. 28, I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish (neither shall any perish); none shall pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave them is greater than all; none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.' They neither shall nor can; God and Christ are engaged in the keeping of them; Christ by God's command as Mediator, and God by Christ's merit: therefore he that separateth us from God must tug with Jesus Christ himself, and be too hard for him also, or else he can never pluck them out of his hands. If they should question Christ's power, because of the ignominy of the cross, the Father's hands are also engaged, for our greater assurance. Can any creature loose his eternal and almighty grasp, and pluck out those whom the Father hath a mind to keep? We do not plead for any wild assurance and certainty of perseverance; we do not say that they that neglect means, or grieve the Spirit, and

do what they list, are sure that they shall not miscarry; that is against the nature of God's dispensation, and the nature of this assurance, and therefore but a vain cavil, It is against the nature of God's dispensation; whom he maketh to persevere, he maketh them to persevere in the use of means. Hezekiah had assurance from God of life for fifteen years, yet he taketh a lump of figs, and applieth it as a plaster to the boil, Isa. xxxviii. 5, with 21. More clearly, Acts xxvii. 31, All shall come to land;' but, Except ye abide in the ship ye cannot be safe.' We are sure of life as long as God hath any service to do for us, yet we are bound to get food and raiment, and to use all means to preserve life. This was Satan's cavil against God's protection over Christ, Thou art sure not to fall, therefore neglect means, cast thyself upon danger, Mat. iv. 9, 10. You learn this doctrine from the devil; thou mayest do what thou list, thou art sure to be safe; it is the devil's divinity. Again, it is against the nature of this assurance; he that hath tasted God's love in God's way cannot reason so. A child that hath a good father that will not see him perish, shall he waste and embezzle his estate he careth not how? A wicked child may presume thus of his father (though it be very disingenuous) because of his natural interest and relation to his father; the kindness which he expecteth is not built upon moral choice, but nature: but a child of God cannot, because he cannot grow up to this certainty but in the exercise of grace; it is begotten and nourished by godly exercises; and the thing itself implieth a contradiction; this were to fall away because we cannot fall away. You may as soon say that the fire should make a man freeze with cold, as that certainty of perseverance in grace should make us do actions contrary to grace.

Again, we do not say that a believer is so sure of his conservation in a state of grace, as that he needeth not to be wary and jealous of

himself: 1 Cor. x. 12, Let him that standeth take heed lest he fall.'
There is a fear of caution, as well as a fear of diffidence and distrust; and there is a great deal of difference between weakening the security of the flesh, and our confidence in Christ. None more apt to suspect themselves than they that are most sure in God, lest by improvidence and unwatchfulness they should yield t6 corruption. Christ had prayed that Peter's faith might not fail, yet together with the other apostles he biddeth him watch, Luke xxii. 40-46. The fear of God is a preserving grace, and taken into the covenant: Jer. xxxii. 40, I will put my fear into their hearts, and they shall not depart from me.'
This is a fear which will stand with faith and certainty; it is a fruit of .the same Spirit, and doth not hinder assurance, but guard it; it is a fear that maketh us watchful against all occasions to sin and spiritual distempers, that we may not give offence to God: as an ingenuous man that hath an inheritance passed over to him by his friend in court is careful not to offend him.
Again, this certainty of our standing in grace doth not exclude prayer: Luke xxii. 46, Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.'
Perseverance is God's gift, and it must be sought in God's way; by Christ's intercession, to preserve the majesty of God, and by our prayers, that we may constantly profess our dependence upon God, and renew our acquaintance with him; besides, by asking blessings in prayer, we are the more warned of our duty; it is a means to keep us gracious and holy. As those that converse often with kings had need be decently clad, and go neat in their apparel, so he that speaketh often to God is bound to be more holy, that he may be the more acceptable to him.
Again, it is not a discontinued, but a constant perseverance that we plead for; not as if an elect person could be quite driven out of the

state of grace, though he be saved at length; he cannot fall totus a toto in totum, the whole man with full consent, from all grace and godliness; he may sin foully, but not fall off totally, no more than finally; there is something that remaineth, a seed, an unction, a root in a dry ground, that will bud and scent again. Briefly, true grace shall never utterly be lost, though it be much weakened, but in the use of means it shall constantly be preserved to eternal life.

Once more, and I have done with the state of the question. God doth not only require the condition of standing, or continuing in the exercise of grace, but give it infallibly. The precepts of the covenant of grace are also promises: Heb. viii. 10, This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel,' &c., where all the articles carry the form of promises. God undertaketh to fulfil our part in us when we submit to the covenant. So Jer. xxxii. 40, I will put my fear into their hearts,' &c. If there be any breach, it must be from our departing from God, or God's departing from us. [29] Now God never departeth, his love never permitteth him to repent of giving his fear and putting his grace into our hearts; but all the fear is our departing from God. So some say, God will not depart from us, if we be not wanting to ourselves. And Bernard observed that our own flesh is not mentioned, Rom. viii., What shall separate us from God?' &c. Soli eum deserere possumus propriâ voluntate--our own will may separate us and withdraw us from God. And the Remonstrants: Though God doth not repent doni dati, of what he hath given, yet we may repent doni accepti et retenti, of what we have received, and grow weary of the service of God. But all is answered by God's undertaking in the covenant: I will put my fear into their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.' He will give faith, and love, and fear, bestow and continue such graces as dispose the soul to perseverance.

2. The grounds of certainty, by which it may appear that we shall be preserved in that state of grace unto which we are called in Jesus Christ. The grounds are many; put them altogether, and you may easily spell out of them the perseverance of the saints.

[1.] There are some grounds on God the Father's part; there is his everlasting love and all-sufficient power. His everlasting love. God doth not love for a fit, but for ever, From everlasting to everlasting,' Ps. ciii. 17, before the world was, and when the world is no more. God's love is not founded upon any temporal accident, but on his own counsel, in which there can be no change, [30] because the same reasons that moved him to choose at first continue for ever. God never repented in time of what he purposed before all time: Rom. xi. 29, His gifts and calling are without repentance.' By gifts he meaneth such as are proper to the elect; and by calling, effectual calling; such is kata` pro'thesin, according to his eternal purpose; of these he never repents. The fruits of repentance in men are shame and sorrow; now God is never ashamed of his choice, nor sorry for his choice, so as to wish it undone. And then the other ground is his all-sufficient power. Almightiness is engaged in the preservation of grace by his eternal love and will, John x. 28, 29. Can they pluck Christ from the throne? are they stronger than Christ's Father?

[2.] There are grounds on Christ's part; his everlasting merit, and close union between him and us, and constant intercession. For his merit, see Heb. ix. 12. He is entered into the holy place, having obtained an eternal redemption for us.' Legal expiations did but last from year to year, but Christ's merit for ever and ever; his redemption is eternal, not only as it is of use in all ages of the church, but in respect of every particular saint. Those who are once redeemed by Christ, they are not redeemed for a time, so as to fall away again;

that, would argue that the virtue of Christ's blood was spent, and could preserve them no longer; but they are for ever kept to salvation. So Heb. x. 14, By one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.' He hath not only purchased a possibility of salvation, but all that we need to our full perfection; it is not for a certain time, but for ever. Then there is a close union between him and us; this is the notion of the text, preserved in Christ,' Look, as it is impossible to sever the leaven and the dough, when they are once mingled and kneaded together, [31] so Christ and a believer, when they are united together, there is no parting more. Can Christ's mystical body be maimed, or lose a joint? Then his constant intercession; that is another ground, a copy of which we have in the 17th of John, where he saith, Keep them through thy name,' &c., and Keep them from the evil,' &c. See Heb. vii. 25, He is able to save to the uttermost those that come to God by him, for he liveth for ever to make intercession for them.' He is interceding with God, that the merit of his death may be applied to us; and what is that? Salvation to the uttermost,' or to the end,' eis to te'los. The heirs of salvation need not fear miscarrying. Jesus Christ, who is the testator, who by will and testament made over the heritage to them, he also is the executor, he liveth for ever to see his own will executed; he died once to make the testament, and he liveth for ever to see it made good. Whenever we are in danger, he is entreating his Father for supports and assistances of grace.

[3.] On the Spirit's part there is a continued influence, so as to maintain the essence and seed of grace. The Father's love is continued by the merit of Christ, that he may not depart from us; and we are preserved by the Spirit of Christ, that we may not depart from him. He doth not only put into our hearts faith, fear, love, and other graces at first, but he maintaineth and keepeth them, that the fire may never

go out. Our hearts are his temple, and he doth not love to leave his dwelling-place. And besides, in the economy of salvation, it is his office to glorify Christ as his vicegerent, and to be our comforter; therefore, with respect to the honour of Christ, and the comfort of believers, he preserveth and maintaineth that grace that is once really wrought in our hearts. To preserve the glory of Christ thus, Christ, you know, hath received a charge from the Father to lose nothing,' John vi. 39, neither body nor soul--nothing that belongeth to an elect person. Now, that he may be true to his trust, he sendeth the Spirit as his deputy or executor, that his merit may be fully applied. It is for the honour of Christ, that wherever the work is begun, wherever he hath been an author, there he may be a finisher also, Heb. xii. 2. It was said of the foolish builder, that he began, and was not able to make an end.' This dishonour can never be cast upon Christ, because of the power and faithfulness of the Spirit; he doth katerga'zesthai, Phil. i. 6, go through with the work which he hath begun; the Spirit is to fit vessels for glory. He doth not use to leave them half carved; he is faithful to Christ, as Christ is to his Father. The Father chooseth the vessels, Christ buyeth them, and the Spirit carveth and fitteth them, that they may be vessels of praise and honour. But this is not all. He preserveth and continueth us in the state of grace as our Comforter; by working grace he puts us into an expectation of glory and happiness, and to make it good he carrieth. on the work without failing; therefore grace is called the first-fruits of the Spirit.' Rom. viii. 24, and the earnest of the Spirit,' 2 Cor. i. 22, and v. 6, for it hath a double use, to be a taste and a pledge. It is a taste to show us how good eternal life is; and a pledge to show us how sure it is. The first degree of regeneration is of this nature; it is an earnest, or gage, assuring us of a more perfect enjoyment--the livery and seisin of glory

to come. As soon as a real change is wrought, the Spirit of God doth give us earnest; and will God lose his earnest? will he give us a pledge, and fail our expectation? Surely no.

Let us now come to application.

Use. 1. It presseth us to persevere with the more care. It is no unreasonable inference: see 1 John ii. 27, 28, Ye shall abide in him; and now little children abide in him;' Since we have so many advantages of standing, let us not fall away. Oh! how great will your sin be, if you should miscarry and dishonour God! We pity a child that falleth when it is not looked after; but when a froward child wresteth and forceth itself out of the arms of the nurse, we are angry with it. You have more reason to stand than others, being brought into an unchangeable state of grace; being held in the arms of Christ, God will be very angry with your slips and failings. Mercy holdeth you fast, and you seek to wrest yourselves out of mercy's arms. None can sin as you do, with such frowardness, with such dishonour to God; you disparage the Spirit's custody, the merit of Christ, and the mercy of the Father. See Heb. iv. 1, Let us therefore fear, a promise being left to us of entering into his rest, lest any should seem to come short of it.'

Look, as some seem to stand that do not, so some seem to fall utterly that do not. A child of God indeed cannot come short, but he should not seem, that is, give any appearance of coming short. When our religious course is interrupted, and we give way to sin and folly, that is a seeming to come short, and so you bring a scandal upon the love of God, as if it were changeable; upon the merit of Christ, as if it were not a perfect merit. Scandalous professors make Arminians; in an age of defection, no wonder if men plead for the apostasy of the saints.

Use 2. If you fall through weakness, be not utterly dismayed. As the spinster leaveth a lock of wool to draw on the next thread, so there is

somewhat left. When you are departed from God, you have more holdfast upon him than another sinner; a child, though a prodigal: go to him and say, Father. David pleadeth the relics of grace yet left, Ps. cxix. 176, I have gone astray like a sheep; seek thy servant, for I do not forget my commandments;' as if he had said, Lord, I have sinned through weakness, but I hope there is some grace left, some bent of heart towards thee. So the church, Isa. lxiv. 8, 9, Now, O Lord, thou art our father,' &c. Yea, God is angry when we do not plead. So Jer. iii. 4, Wilt thou not cry, Thou art my father?' &c. You have an interest, though you have been disobedient. Thus do, and your falls will be an advantage; as you have seen men go back to fetch their leaps more commodiously.

Use 3. When you stand, let it excite you to love and thankfulness. Nothing maketh the saints love God more than the unchangeableness of his love. When they see themselves safe in the midst of weaknesses and Satan's daily assaults, it doth much endear God to their souls. Certainly Daniel was much affected with his preservation in the lions' den, when he saw the lions ramping and roaring about him, and yet restrained with the chains of providence, that they could do him no harm. So the children of God must needs love their preserver when they consider what dangers are round about them, how little they subsist by their own strength, 1 Sam. ii. 9, and how much they have done a thousand times to cause God to withdraw his Spirit from them; and therefore the great argument why the saints do love and praise him is not only the freedom of his grace, but the unchangeableness and constancy of it: His mercy endureth for ever;' it is several times repeated, Ps. cxxxvi. So Ps. cvi. 1, Praise ye the Lord; O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever.' No form is more frequent in the mouths of the saints: and good reason; for

alas! if we were left to ourselves, we should damn ourselves every hour. We have a revolting heart,' Jer. v. 23, xiv. 10. We are like glasses without a bottom; as soon as they are out of hand they are broken; we cannot stand of ourselves: and we have a restless enemy, that desireth to toss us and vex us, as wheat is tossed from sieve to sieve, Luke xxii. 31; and we have often forfeited God's protection, and grieved him day by day. Were it not for everlasting mercy, what would become of us? Certainly they that do not love God for their preservation, they are not sensible of their condition in the world. What a naughty heart they carry about with them! It is a miracle that ever grace should be preserved there, where there is so much pride, love of pleasures, worldly cares, brutish lusts; that such a heavenly plant can thrive in the midst of so many weeds. And what a busy devil they have to do withal, who watcheth all advantages, as a dog that standeth waving his tail (it is Chrysostom's comparison) and expecting a bit; and his envy and malice is most bent against them that have most grace. Finally, they do not consider that the world is full of snares and dangerous allurements; for if they did, they could not choose but fall a-blessing of God for Jesus Christ, who yet fasteneth them as a nail in the holy place. I remember one of the fathers bringeth in the flesh saying, Ego deficiam, I will surely fail and miscarry; and the world Ego decipiam, I will deceive them and entice them; and Satan, Ego eripiam, I will snatch them and carry them away; and God saith, Ego custodiam, I will keep them, I will never fail them nor forsake them;' and there lieth our safety and security.

Use 4. It informeth us that if any fall often, constantly, frequently, easily, they have no interest in grace: 1 John iii. 9, He that is born of God sinneth not,' ou poiei amarti'an, he makes not a trade of sin; that is the force of the phrase. God's children slip often, but not

with such a frequent constant readiness into the same sin. As fair meadows may be everflown, but marsh ground is drowned with the return of every tide, so are wicked men carried away with every return of the temptation; therefore he that liveth in a course of profaneness, worldliness, drunkenness, his spot is not as the spot of God's children.' You are tried by your constant course and walk, Rom. viii. 1. What is your road? what do you do constantly, easily, frequently? I except only those sins which are of usual incidence and sudden surreption; as sudden stirrings of passion in a choleric temper, and vanity of thoughts, and distractions in duties, &c. And yet for these a man should be the more humble and watchful; if they be not felt and striven against, and mourned for, it is a bad sign.

Use 5. It provoketh us to get an interest in such a sure condition. Be not contented--(1.) With outward happiness; things are worthy according to their duration. Nature hath such a sense of God's eternity, that the more lasting things are, it accounteth them the better. An immortal soul must have an eternal good. Now all things in the world are frail and pass away, therefore called uncertain riches,' 1 Tim. vi. 17. It is uncertain whether we shall get them, and uncertain whether we shall keep them, and uncertain whether we shall live to enjoy them if they stay with us. All of this side grace is uncertain; these things are usually blasted in their flower and beauty, as Herod was stricken in the midst of all his royalty: so that a man may out live his happiness, which is the greatest misery; or at least it must terminate with death; there is no use of wealth in the other world. But now the better part can never be taken from us,' Luke x. 42; and by seeking that we may have other things with a blessing, Mat. vi. 33. (2.) Rest not in gifts, they are for the body rather than the person that hath them; as many are carnal, and yet come behind in no gift. God useth them like

negroes, to dig in the mines of knowledge, that others may have the gold. Judas could cast out devils, and yet afterward was cast out among devils; see 1 Cor. xii. 31. The apostle had discoursed largely of gifts, and then concludeth thus: But yet I show you a more excellent way;' and what is that? Grace that abideth and endureth for ever, as in the next chapter. Many that have great abilities to pray, preach, discourse, yet fall away. According to the place which they sustain in the body, so they have great gifts of knowledge, utterance, abilities to comfort, direct, and instruct others, to answer doubts, to reason and argue for God, for conference and holy discourse, and yet fall foully; as those Heb. vi. 4, are said to be partakers of the Holy Ghost;' that is, to have a great share of church gifts. Nay, this is not all; gifts themselves wither and vanish when the bodily vigour is spent: The glory of a man is as the flower of the grass,' 1 Peter i. 24. By the glory of a man is meant whatever excellency we have by nature, wit, knowledge, strength of natural parts, as well as wealth and riches. Many times we, like the dry stalk, remaineth [32] when the flower is gone; nothing but the gracious work of the Spirit will last for ever. (3.) Seeming and unsound grace, as false faith, such as beginneth in joy, will end in trouble; [33] it easeth you for the present, but you shall lie down in sorrow. General probabilities, loose hopes, uncertain conjectures, vanishing apprehensions of comfort, all these things soon come to nothing. The planting of true faith is troublesome at first, but it leadeth to true comfort; otherwise you may look upon the gospel with some kind of delectation for a while, as thorns may blaze under the pot though they cannot keep in the fire: therefore do not rest in tasting the good word,' Heb. vi. 5, in some slight and transitory comfort. Again, there is formal profession. Many may begin in the Spirit' and end in the flesh,' Gal. iii. 3. A man may

seem to himself and to the church of God to have true grace; he may profess the truth, escape the pollutions of the world,' that is, foul gross sins; yea, and all this not out of a carnal aim, but out of a slight and insufficient touch of the truth upon the conscience, and yet fall away, like the corn in the stony ground, that grew up, but had no root. But much more, Christians, will that form which is taken up out of private aims fail and miscarry. God delighteth to take off the mask and disguise of a hypocrite by letting him fall into some scandalous sin, or by changing the times and posture of affairs, or by sending a storm. Paint is soon washed off: therefore rest not in these outward and superficial changes, till solid and substantial grace be wrought in you.

Use 6. Is comfort to God's children: grace is sure, and the privileges of it are sure. Grace itself is sure; through your folly it may be nigh unto death, but cannot die. This is the advantage of spiritual comforts, that they do not only satisfy our desires, but secure us against our fears. The redeemed of the Lord have an everlasting joy,' Isa. xxxv. 10. Once in Christ, and for ever preserved in Christ. Grace would be little better than temporal things if it did yield but a temporary refreshing. They weaken Christian comfort that make believers walk with Christ like dancers upon a rope, every moment in fear of breaking their necks. This is the comfort of a gracious heart, that as nothing shall altogether cut him off from enjoying God, so nothing shall utterly make him cease to love God. The children of God would be troubled if grace should fail, though their privileges should not be cut off; you are sure of both; for as grace is sure, so are also the privileges of grace. This was figured under the law; an Israelite could never wholly alienate his inheritance and title to the land: Lev. xxv. 23, His title to the land shall not be cut off, nor sold for ever.'

This was a type of our spiritual inheritance in Christ, which cannot be alienated from us; he might for. a while pass it away, but it was to return again; so those that are made co-heirs with Christ are never disinherited. It is true we forfeit it by the merit of our actions, but God doth not take the advantage of every offence. It is true we lose the evidences that are in our keeping, peace of conscience, and joy in the Holy Ghost; but the estate itself is indefeasible, and cannot be made away from us. Sometimes we are under a kind of sequestration, and there is a suspension of comfort and grace; as the Israelite might make away his inheritance for a time; but we shall recover possession again, though not by ourselves, yet by our Goel, our kinsman, or him that is next of blood. As under the law, if a person were not able to redeem the inheritance, the kinsman was to redeem it; so Jesus Christ, our kinsman after the flesh, he is our Goel, he interposeth by his merit, and reconcileth us to God. Well, then, you see grace is kept, and the privileges of grace are kept in Christ. But now, because comforts are never prized but in their sea son, and men that have not been exercised in spiritual conflicts nauseate these sweet truths, they know not what it is to be left to uncertainty when troubles come like waves, one in the neck of another; therefore let us see when this truth will be most sweet and seasonable. (1.) In great troubles, when God seemeth to hide his face. Oh! how sweet is it to hear him say, I will not forsake thee till I have performed all that I promised thee,' Gen. xxviii. 15; all this shall better thy heart and hasten thy glory. In times of distress we are apt to think that God hath cast us off, and will never look after us more, though formerly we have had real experiences of his grace. What a foolish creature is man, to weaken his assurance when he should come to use it! to unravel all his hope and experiences in times of trouble, which is the only season to make use of them! (2.) In the

hour of temptation and hard conflicts with doubts and corruptions. When we are sensible of the power of sin, and how difficult it is to remove it out of the heart, we are apt to say, as David after all his experiences, I shall one day perish by the hand of Saul,' 1 Sam. xxvii. 1; and many times out of distrust give over the combat. Oh! then, remember now you are preserved in Christ, and that nothing shall separate: as Sarcerius came to Camerarius' wife, when she had been exercised with a long and tedious conflict, and read to her the latter end of the 8th of the Romans, she brake out in triumph, using Paul's words, Nay, in all these things we are more then conquerors.' O Christians! neither sin, nor devil, nor world can divide you from Christ; for he did not only tread down Satan,' but under your feet.' Rom. xvi. 20. (3.) In times of great danger and defection, either through error and persecution; as Saunders trembled to think of the fire. Especially when others fall fearfully, who were before us in knowledge and profession of zeal and piety; when the first become last, when glorious luminaries are eclipsed, and leave their orb and station; as the martyrs were troubled to hear of the revolt of some great scholars that had appeared for the gospel. When Hymeneus and Philetus, two eminent professors, fell, there was a great shaking, 2 Tim. ii. 18, But the foundation of the Lord standeth sure,' &c.; that is the comfort the apostle opposeth in such a case. (4.) In times of disheartening, be cause of the difficulties of religion, when the use of means groweth troublesome. To quicken you in your Christian course, think of the unchangeableness of God's love. All graces rise according to the proportion and measure of faith; loose hopes weaken endeavours: 1 Cor. ix. 26, I run not as one uncertain.' Those that ran a race gave over when one had far outgone them, as being discouraged and without hope. When hope is broken, the edge of endeavours is blunted. Go on with

confidence, you are assured of the issue; God will bless you, and keep you to his everlasting kingdom. (5.) In the hour of death. When all things else fail you, God will not fail you: this is the last brunt; do but wait a little while, and you will find more behind than ever you enjoyed; death shall not separate:' as Olevian comforted himself with that, Isa. liv. 10, The hills and mountains may depart, but my loving-kindness shall not depart from you,' [34] Being in the agonies of death, he said, Sight is gone, speech and hearing is departing, feeling is almost gone, but the loving-kindness of God will never depart. The Lord give us such a confidence in that day, that we may die glorying in the preservation of our Redeemer.

[9] See my Exposition on James i. 1.

[10] To` me` du'naton allo's echein, all' o`tos os emeis le'gomen.'--Arist.

[11] I suppose Austin's Tolle et Lege was of this nature.

[12] It was a profanation in Belshazzar to drink in the cups of the temple.

[13] So obstinate is man's heart, that that is all that can be done; the weakening of sin, but not the destruction of it.

[14] As a child is true man, though not a perfect man, as soon as he is born; he hath all the parts, though not the growth, and strength, and stature.

[15] All was depraved by Adam, and all is renewed by Christ.

[16] Ea demum vera est religio, imitari quem colis.'--Lactant.

[17] Cho'ris hou; the masculine article showeth that it is to be referred to agi'asmos.

[18] Kata` te`n analogi'on katharo'tetos.

[19] Caspar Stres. in Miscellaneis; Multi gloriantur cor suum bonum esse, etiamsi extus vita non respondeat; decipiuntur isti homines, nam

si candela intus accensa est, lucerna extus necessario lucet et splendet; posito quod cor tuum bonum est, tamen damnaberis, quia Christus non judicat secundum cor sed secundum opera.' If the Israelites had slam and eaten the Passover, yet if the door-posts were not sprinkled with blood, the angel would not spare them.

[20] Qu. puppets'?--ED.

[21] Ps. xl. 7, marg.--ED.

[22] See Mr Lyford's Catechism, last edition, pp. 308, 309.

[23] Domine, errare per me potui; redire non potui.'--Aug. Meditat.

[24] Non potest reddi nisi ab eo a quo potuit dari.'--Aug.

[25] Primum famem suasit, deinde laqueum.'--Tertul. in Apol.

[26] Christianus salvis oculis foeminam videt.'--Tertul. ib.

[27] Causa ob quam Filius nos amat, quia ipsi a Patre demandatum est, et causa cur Pater nobis favet, est quia hoc Filius ab ipso postulat et promeretur,' &c.--See Stella at large, De Amore Dei, 18.

[28] Ouk e'phe i'na me` arne'se, all' oste me` ekli'pein te`n pi'stin sou.'--Chrysost.

[29] God's love will not let him depart from us, Isa. liv. 10, and fear will not let us depart from God.

[30] Ameta'theton tes boules.'--Heb. vi. 17.

[31] Sicut impossible est massam a pasta separare,' &c.--Luther.

[32] Qu. we are like the dry stalk remaining'?--ED.

[33] Hymeneus and Alexander are said to make shipwreck of faith, that is, false faith, 1 Tim. i. 19, 20.

[34] Vide Scultetum in Isa. liv.

Chapter 6

Ver. 2. Mercy unto you, and peace and love be multiplied.

We are now come to the third thing in the inscription, and that is the form of salutation, delivered, as all apostolical salutations are, in the way of a prayer. In which we may observe--(1.) The matter of the prayer, or blessings prayed for, which are three, mercy, peace, and love. (2.) The manner or degree of enjoyment, be multiplied.

I begin with the matter, or blessings prayed for. It will not be altogether unuseful to observe that diversity which is used in salutations. In the Old Testament peace was usually wished without any mention of grace; as Ps. cxxii. 8, For my brethren and companions' sake I will say, Peace be within thee;' and Dan. vi. 25, Peace be multiplied unto you.' But in the times of the gospel, grace being more fully delivered, that was also added and expressed in the forms of salutation. But yet in the times of the gospel there is some variety and difference. Sometimes you shall meet with a salutation merely civil, as James i. 1, To the twelve tribes chai'rein, greeting;' so Acts xv. 23, which was the usual salutation among the heathen; but most usually it is grace and peace.' Rom. i. 7; and in other places, grace, mercy, and peace,' as 2 John 3 and 1 Tim. i. 2; and here it differeth from them all, for it is mercy, peace, and love.' And Causaubon observeth that the Greek fathers, if they wrote to a carnal man, they would wish him grace, but not peace; if to a godly man, they would wish him grace and peace too. To touch upon these things is sufficient. From these blessings mentioned in this place I shall observe something in general, and then handle them particularly and apart.

First, In the general consideration you may observe:--

Obs. 1. That spiritual blessings are the best blessings that we can

wish to ourselves and others. The apostles in their salutations do not wish temporal felicity, but spiritual grace. God's people pray for one another out of the communion of the Spirit, and for themselves out of a principle of the divine nature; and therefore they do not seek wealth and honour for themselves or one another, but increase of God's favour and image. It is true, nature is allowed to speak in prayer, but grace must be heard first. Our first and chiefest requests must be for mercy, peace, and love, and then other things shall be added to us,' Mat. vi. 33. [35] The way to be heard in other things is first to beg for grace: Ps. xxi. 4, He asked life of thee, and thou gavest him length of days for ever.' Solomon sought wisdom, and together with it found riches and honour in great abundance. Well, then, if thou prayest for thyself, make a wise choice, beg for spiritual blessings. So David prayeth, Ps. cvi. 4, Remember me, O Lord, with the favour that thou bearest unto thine own people.' Nothing less would content him than favour ites' mercy. Other blessings are dispensed out of common pity to the generality of men; but these are mercies privilegiate, and given to favourites. Now, saith David, Of this mercy, Lord. No common blessing would serve his turn. So Ps. cxix. 132, Look upon me, and be merciful to me, as thou usest to do to those that love thy name.' Surely that which God giveth to his people, that is a better mercy than that which God giveth to his enemies. Again, these are mercies that cost God dearer. They flow to you in the blood of his Son; yea, they are mercies that are better in themselves. Wealth and honour may become a burden, yea, life itself may become a burden, but not mercy, not grace, not peace of conscience; and therefore they are better than life,' Ps. lxiii. 3, than wealth, than honour. None ever complained of too much mercy, of too much love of God. These are blessings that swallow up other miseries, yea, the loss of other blessings. Grace with poverty,

it is a preferment, James i. 9. Peace of conscience with outward troubles is a happy condition. If there be a flowing of spiritual comforts, 2 Cor. i. 5, as there is an ebbing of outward comforts, we are not much wronged. Therefore first seek these blessings. Again, if you pray for others, pray for grace in the first place. That is an evidence of spiritual affection. Carnal men wish such things to others as they prize and affect themselves; so also do gracious men, and therefore their thoughts run more upon mercy, peace, and grace than wealth and honour and greatness. When a man sendeth a token to a friend, he would send the best of the kind. These are the best mercies. If you were to deal with God for your own souls, you can ask no better. You may ask temporal things, for God loveth the prosperity of his saints;' but these special blessings should have the preferment in your wishes and desires of good to them, and then you are most likely to speed. Our Lord Christ, in the 17th of John, commendeth the college of the apostles to the Father; and what doth he ask for them? dominion and worldly respect? Surely no; nothing but preservation from evil, and sanctification by the truth. These are the chiefest blessings we should look after as Christians.

Obs. 2. Observe, again, the aptness of the requests to the persons for whom he prayeth. Those that are sanctified and called' have still need of mercy, peace, and love.' They need mercy, because we merit nothing of God, neither before grace received nor afterward. The very continuance of our glory in heaven is a fruit of mercy, not of merit. Our obligation to free grace never ceaseth. We need also more peace. There are degrees in assurance as well as faith. There is a temperate confidence, and there are ravishing delights, so that peace needs to be multiplied also. And then love, that being a grace in us, it is always in progress. In heaven only it is complete. Take it for love to God;

there we cleave to him without distraction and weariness or satiety. God in communion is always fresh and new to the blessed spirits. And take it for love to the saints; it is only perfect in heaven, where there is no ignorance, pride, partialities, and factions--where Luther and Zuinglius, Hooper and Ridley, join in perfect concert.

Obs. 3. Again, observe the aptness of these requests to the times wherein he prayed, when religion was scandalised by loose Christians, and carnal doctrines were obtruded upon the church. In times of defection from God, and wrong to the truth, there is great need of mercy, peace, and love. Of mercy, that we may be kept from the snares of Satan. Christians, whence is it that any of us stand? that we are found faithful? It is because we have obtained mercy. They would deceive, if it were possible, the very elect,' Mat. xxiv. 24. Why is it not possible to deceive the elect as well as others? of what mould are they made? wherein do they differ from other men? I answer--Elective grace and mercy interposeth; it is not for any power in themselves, but because mercy hath singled them out, and chosen them for a distinct people unto God. And we need peace and inward consolations, that we may the better digest the misery of the times; and love, that we may be of one mind, and stand together in the defence of the truth.

Obs. 4. Again, note the aptness of the blessings to the persons for [36] whom he prayeth. Here are three blessings, that do more eminently and distinctly suit with every person of the Trinity; and I do the rather note it, because I find the apostle elsewhere distinguishing these blessings by their proper fountains; as Rom. i. 7, Grace to you, and peace from God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ.' Sort the blessings right; there is grace from the Father, and peace from Christ. So here is mercy from God the Father, who is called the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort,' 2 Cor. i. 3; and peace from the

Son, for he is our peace,' Eph. ii. 14; and love from the Spirit: Rom. v. 5 , The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given to us.' Thus you see every person concurreth to our happiness with his distinct blessing.

Obs. 5. In the next place, how aptly these blessings are suited among themselves: first mercy, then peace, and then love. Mercy doth not differ much from that which is called grace in Paul's epistles, only grace doth more respect the bounty of God, as mercy doth our want and need. By mercy, then, is meant the favour and good-will of God to miserable creatures; and peace signifieth all blessings inward and outward, as the fruits and effects of that favour and good-will; more especially calmness and serenity of conscience, or a secure enjoying of the love of God, which is the top of spiritual prosperity. And then love sometimes signifieth God's love to us; here I should rather take it for our love to God, and to the brethren for God's sake. So that mercy is the rise and spring of all, peace is the effect and fruit, and love is the return. He beginneth with mercy, for that is the fountain and beginning of all the good things which we enjoy: higher than love and mercy we cannot go, for God's love is the reason of itself, Deut. vii. 7, 8; Rom. ix. 15; Isa. xlv. 15, and we can deserve nothing at God's hands but wrath and misery; and therefore we should still honour mercy, and set the crown upon mercy's head (as further anon); that which you give to merit you take from mercy. Now the next thing is peace. Mark the order still; without mercy and grace there can be no true peace: Isa. lvii. 21, There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked;' they say, Peace, peace,' but my God doth not say so. Christ left his peace with his own disciples, John xiv. 27, and not as worldly and external peace is left, in the happiness of which both good and bad are concerned; that is general, but this is proper, confined, within

the conscience of him that enjoyeth it, and given to the godly. It is the Lord's method to pour in first the oil of grace,' and then the oil of gladness.' Alas! the peace of a wicked man it is but a frisk or fit of joy, whilst conscience, God's watchman, is napping; stolen waters and bread eaten in secret,' Prov. ix. 17. The way to true peace is to apply yourselves to God for mercy to be accepted in Christ, to be renewed according to the image of Christ; otherwise sin and guilt will create fears and troubles. Again, the last thing is love; great privileges require answerable duty. Mercy and peace need another grace, and that is love. It is God's gift as well as the rest; we have graces from God as well as privileges, and therefore he beggeth love as well as mercy and peace; but it must be our act, though we have the grace from above. We would all have mercy and peace, but we are not so zealous to have love kindled in our hearts. Mercy, peace, all this runneth downward, and respects our interest, but love, that mounteth upward, and respects God himself. Certainly they have no interest in mercy, and were never acquainted with true peace, that do not find their hearts inflamed with love to God and a zeal for his glory; that as he hath ordered all things for our profit, so we may order and refer all things to his glory and honour. Mercy runneth down from God, and begets peace of conscience, for peace of conscience is nothing else but a solid taste of God's mercy; and peace of conscience begets love, by which we clasp about God again; for love is nothing else but a reverberation or beating back of God's beam upon himself, or a return of duty in the sense of mercy; so that God is at the beginning and ending, and either way is the utmost boundary of the soul: [37] all things are from him and to him.

Secondly, Let me handle them particularly and apart. And first, mercy, which is the rise and cause of all the good we have from God. The Lord

would dispense blessings in such a way as might beat down despair and carnal confidence. Man hath need of mercy, but deserveth none. Despair would keep us from God, and carnal confidence robbeth him of his glory; therefore, as the Lord would not have flesh to glory, so neither to be cut off from all hope. Mercy salveth both; we need not fly the sight of God: there is mercy with him, why he should be feared, 7 Ps. cxxx. 4. False worships are supported by terror; but God, that hath the best title to the heart, will gain it by love and offers of mercy. And we have no reason to ascribe anything to ourselves, since mercy doth all in the court of heaven, and not justice. If you reckon upon a debt, you are sure to miss. It is a part of God's supremacy that all his blessings should come as a gift; that he should act freely, and entertain us as a king, not as an host. Merit taketh off something of his royalty and supreme majesty. Touching the mercy of God, give me leave to give you a few observations.

1. It is the aim of the whole scripture to represent God merciful. [38] It is true, God is infinitely just, as well as infinitely merciful; but he delighteth in gracious discoveries of himself to the creature; he counteth it his glory. Moses was earnest with God to show him his glory, and then God proclaimeth his name: Exod. xxxiv. 5, 6, The Lord, the Lord, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin,' &c. In this description there is more spoken of his mercy than of his justice; and, first, his mercy is described, and then his justice; for justice is only added to invite men to take hold of his mercy, and to show that justice is never exercised but in avenging the quarrel of abused mercy. So he is called a God of pardon,' Neh. ix. 17, as if wholly made up of sweetness. So 2 Cor. i. 3, he is called pate`r oikti'rmom, Father of mercies, and God of all

consolations.' He is a just God, but he is not called the Father of justice. Mercy is natural to him; he counteth it as the proper fruit and product of the divine essence.

2. Mercy is represented as his delight and pleasure: so Micah vii. 18, Mercy pleaseth him.' It is an act exercised with complacency. Judgment is called his strange work,' Isa. xxviii. 21. God loveth to bless and protect; to destroy is not suitable to his disposition; it is a thing that he is forced to. Punitive acts in the representations of the word are most against his bowels, drawn and extorted from him; [39] as Jer. xliv. 22, The Lord could no longer bear because of your doings: their sins were so clamorous that they would not let God be quiet; he would bear no longer, unless they would make an idol of him. But now all acts of grace and favour are exercised with delight: I will rejoice over them to do them good,' Jer. xxxii. 41. It is as pleasing to God to do it as it is to us to receive it. The scripture, after the manner of men, doth often represent a conflict in the attributes about sinners; and if mercy get the upper hand, it is always with joy and triumph: James ii. 13, Mercy rejoiceth over judgment;' but if he be compelled to strike, and justice must be exercised, the scriptures represent a reluctation in his bowels: Lam. iii. 33, He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men;' in the original, from his heart;' but is like a father, with a rod in his hand, and tears in his eyes.

3. The scripture representeth God as exercising mercy, though with some present disadvantage to his glory; as mercy to the Ninevites, though the credit of his message lay at stake: Nineveh shall be destroyed in forty days;' yet God spared it, and therefore Jonah, in a pet, challengeth him for it: Jonah iv. 2, Lord, was not this my saying when I was in my country? for I knew that thou wert a gracious God.' As if he said, I knew it would come to this; that the prophets of Israel

should be disgraced before the men of Nineveh; and to threaten judgments in his name is to expose ourselves to derision. When we have done our errand, free grace will make us all liars. To this effect did he expostulate with God. God might easily destroy sinners with much honour to himself; but he is long-suffering, even then when his patience for a while seemeth to impair the revenues of heaven. The world suspects his being, the saints quarrel his justice and question his love, and all because the wicked are prosperous, and God keepeth silence. The great stumbling-block at which most have dashed the foot of their faith, is the suspension of due judgments. What was the effects of his patience to them of Assyria and Babylon? The Lord himself telleth you, Isa. lii. 5, My name every day is blasphemed.' That was all he got by it: his people suffered in person, and God himself in his reputation; all that he got was blasphemies, and reproaches, and injuries: so Ps. 1. 21, I kept silence, and thou thoughtest that I was every way like thyself;' that was the effect--gross conceits of his glory and essence. When judgments are quick and speedy, the world is under greater awe, the confidence of the saints is strengthened and supported, and God's honour is more clear and un stained; yet, with all these disadvantages to his glory, if we may speak so, God forbeareth. Certainly his heart is much set upon the honour of his mercy, that God will glorify it though other attributes seem to suffer loss.

4. The scriptures speak much of his readiness to receive returning sinners. Though they have done infinite wrong to his holiness, yet upon repentance, and as soon as they begin to submit, mercy embraceth and huggeth them, as if there had been no breach: Luke xv. 20, I will go to my father,' and the father ran to meet him.' So Isa. lxv. 24, Before they call,' &c. So Ps. xxxii. 5.'1 said, and thou forgavest,' &c. So

Jer. xxxi. 18, with 20, I have heard Ephraim be moaning himself,' &c.; and presently, O my dear and pleasant child!' The first relentings of the creature work upon the bowels of mercy. Love's pace is very swift, it runneth to meet a returning sinner. Christ cometh skipping over the mountains,' Cant. ii. 8. He thinketh that he can never be soon enough with us. He would fain have the company of sinners, and therefore meeteth them more than half-way. When we but conceive a purpose, we presently receive the fruit of his early mercies.

5. God doth not only admit them to come, but of his own accord inviteth them that are slack and backward. The scriptures do every where record the intreaties of God: he draweth us with cords of love; cords that are woven and spun out of Christ's heart and bowels. In one place thus, Cant. iv. 8, Come away from Lebanon, my sister, my spouse, from the lions' dens, from the mountains of leopards.' Christ's love is hot and burning, he thinketh we tarry too long from his embraces. So Cant. v. 2, Open to me, my sister, my spouse,' &c. Christ stands begging for entrance. Lost man! do but suffer me to save thee; poor sinner! suffer me to love thee. These are the charms of gospel rhetoric. So Isa. xlix., Hearken to me, and attend to the words of my mouth,' &c. O sinners! you will not hearken to me for the good of your souls! You see none singeth so sweetly as the bird of paradise, the turtle that chirpeth upon the church's hedges, that he may cluck sinners to himself. The scripture is full of such a holy witchcraft, such passionate charms, to entice souls to their happiness.

6. They that constantly refuse the offers of his grace are borne with for a long time: Rom. ix. 22, polle` makrothumi'a, He endured with much long-suffering,' &c. All may bless God for patience; they owe a heavy debt to divine justice, yet it is a long time ere God putteth the bond in suit; though they dare him to his face, yet they walk up and down

without the arrest of vengeance. He beareth with them years and years, after a thousand and a thousand affronts, from their cradles to their graves. When they were green wood, they were fuel fit enough for divine wrath. Oh! consider, there can be no cause of this but his mercy to his worst creatures. It is not out of any delight in sin, for he is holy, and cannot endure to look upon it: Hab. i. 13, Of purer eyes,' &c. It is not out of any stupid neglect; he is just, and will not clear the guilty,' Exod. xxxiv. 7. It is not out of any ignorance; he telleth man his thoughts;' nor for want of power; so men forbear. The sons of Zeruiah may be too hard for them; but, 1 Sam. xxiv. 19, If a man findeth his enemy, will he let him go well away?' When they are in our power, we satisfy our wrath and revenge to the full. But now God upholdeth all things by the word of his power;' he can in a minute speak us into nothing. As the impression of a seal upon the water dependeth upon the seal, if the seal be taken away the impression vanisheth; so do our beings depend upon providential influence and supportation. If God should withdraw the word of his power, we should soon vanish and disappear; therefore it is not for want of power, but merely out of mercy that we are forborne. How may we wonder at this! We are of eager and tart spirits, sharp-set upon revenge. Could we have put up so many refusals of love, such despites done to mercy, such wrongs, such grievings of spirit, and yet have contained? The disciples themselves, though holy men, when they were sensible of being slighted in the village of Samaria, called for fire from heaven,' Luke ix. 54. Certainly we could not endure such a contradiction of sinners. If thunderbolts were in our power we should soon kindle a burning, and turn the world into smoke and desolation.

7. It is not only the aim of the word, but of providence, and of all the dispensations of God to the creature, to represent him merciful.

The whole world is a great volume, written within and without with characters and lines of mercy: Ps. cxlv. 9, His mercy is over all his works.' Every creature beareth the marks and prints of divine goodness and bounty. Once more, the world is a great theatre and stage whereon mercy has been acting its part for these six thousand years. Justice is to have a solemn triumph at the last day. Now and then God hath kept a petty sessions, and given us occasion to say, Yerily there is a God that judgeth the world,' as well as preserveth the world. But the greatest part that hath been acted upon the theatre of the world is mercy; as you will easily see, if you consider--(1.) The black lines of providence. If God threaten, it is that he may not punish; if he punish, it is that he may not punish for ever. In the sadder providences, though there be misery at the top, yet there is mercy at the bottom. Many times God threateneth, but it is to reclaim; though he doth not change his counsel, yet he doth often change his sentence, [40] Jer. xviii. 7, 8: when the message is nothing but plucking up and pulling down, free grace cometh in with a sudden rescue, and prevents the execution. Mercy, you see, is forced to use all methods, and to speak in the language of justice, that men may be more capable to receive it. Sometimes God punisheth, but with what aim? That he may not for ever punish. It is we that make punishment to be a pledge of eternal damnation; in its own aim it is a prevention, and so it proveth to the elect: We are judged of the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world,' 1 Cor. xi. 32. So Hosea ii. 6, I will hedge up her way with thorns,' &c. We should soon grow worldly, and drowned in carnal business and projects, if God did not come now and then and blast our enterprises, and make us see our folly. We are puffed up, and God pricketh the bladder, 2 Cor, xii. 7. How sweet is this, when in the midst of judgment God remembereth mercy!' Yea, the very executions of

justice are found to be one of the methods of mercy. In the middle of the first curse God dropped out a promise of the blessed seed; so often mercy overtaketh a judgment, and maketh it cease in the midway. Look, as there was a conflict between the twins in Tamar's womb, Zarah did put out the hand, but Pharez broke out first; so is there between God's mercy and justice: justice puts out the hand in a threatening, or some beginnings of a judgment, but mercy gets the start and breaketh out first. (2.) Consider the white lines of providence. He entreateth that he may do us good, and doth us good that he may do us good for ever. For his entreaties: It is not duty so much that is in the bottom of the exhortation as mercy. To glorify mercy is the last aim of God and his eternal purpose: He hath accepted us in the beloved, to the praise of his glorious grace,' Eph. i. 6. God receiveth no profit; he entreateth us not that he may be happy, but that he may be liberal. See Prov. ix. 12, If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself; but if thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear it.' God dealeth with us as earnestly, as effectually, as if the profit were his own, but it wholly redoundeth to us. Again, he doth us good that he may do us good for ever. He trusteth us with mammon to prepare us for the true riches, Luke xvi. 11, and with the riches of grace to prepare us for glory. Look, as men, when they would put precious liquor into a vessel, first try it with water to see whether it leaketh or no, so doth God try us with common mercies; he giveth us an estate in the world, that, being moved with his goodness, we may look after an estate in the covenant and an interest in Christ, and so fit us for heaven. It is our wretchedness to make our table a snare and our welfare a trap. As the sea turneth all that it receiveth into salt water, the fresh streams, the influences of the heavens, &c., so do carnal men assimilate and corrupt their comforts, and by little and little all their blessings are cursed; for

mercy can bear anything but a constant abuse and neglect of itself. Certainly God's revealed will is otherwise; that which cometh from God should lead us to God. See Rom. ii. 4, 5.

8. Consider in how many notions mercy is represented to us. God's mercy hath many names; a distinct consideration of them yieldeth an advantage in believing; for though they express the same thing, yet every notion begetteth a fresh thought, by which mercy is more taken abroad in the view of conscience. This is that pouring out of God's name,' spoken of Cant. i. 3. Ointment in the box doth not yield such a fragrancy as when it is poured out, and spices do not give forth their smell till they are chafed. Nothing is more conducible to beget a trust than distinct thoughts and conceptions of God's mercy. Let us take notice of some places where it is set forth. See Ps. ciii. 8, The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.' The expression is diversified, and I note it the rather, because in other places the same notions of mercy are punctually expressed: see Neh. ix. 17; so Ps. cxlv. 8, and in divers other places: Joel ii. 12; Jonah iv. 2; chiefly see that Exod. xxxiv. 7, and you will find that this is the very description which God hath given of himself. Now what doth the Spirit of God aim at in this express enumeration and accumulation of names of mercy, but to give us a help in meditation, and that our thoughts may be more distinct? (1.) The first notion is mercy, which is an attribute whereby God inclineth to succour them that are in misery. It is an attribute that merely respecteth the creature. The love and knowledge of God first falleth upon himself, but mercy is only transient, and passeth out to the creatures. God knoweth himself, loveth himself, but he is not merciful to himself. And then it respecteth the creatures in misery; for misery is mercy's only motive; justice seeketh a fit object, but mercy a fit occasion; justice requireth desert, but mercy

only want and need. (2.) The next notion is grace, which noteth the free bounty of God, and excludeth all merit of the creature. Grace doth all gratis, freely.' Rom. iii. 24, though there be no precedent, obligation, or debt, or hope of recompense, whereby anything may accrue to himself; only that it may be well with the creature. God's external motive is our misery, his internal motive is his own grace and elective love. Am I in want? there is mercy; am I unworthy? there is grace. Mercy respects us as we are in ourselves worthy of condemnation, grace as compared with others not elected. The ultimate reason of the choice is God's grace. The angels that never sinned are saved merely out of grace, but men that were once miserable are saved not only out of grace, but also out of mercy. (3.) The next notion is long-suffering, or slowness to anger. The Lord is not easily overcome by the wrongs or sins of the creature, but easily overcometh them by his own patience and goodness. He doth not only pity our misery, that is mercy; and do us good for nothing, that is grace; but beareth long with our infirmities. Alas! if God were as short and swift in the executions of revenge as men are, God must create another world to raise up seed to Christ. [41] If he did not wait upon sinners, there would be none made saints. We provoked him to cut us off long since, but wrath is not easily heightened into rage, and therefore he waiteth that he may be gracious,' Isa. xxx. 18. (4.) Kindness or bounty, plenteous in goodness,' berab chesid. God's communications of his grace to the creature are every way rich and full. You may say, God is merciful, gracious, patient, but will he be thus to me? Yes, he is plenteous in goodness,' kind and communicative: Ps. cxix. 68, Thou art good, and dost good;' therefore David goeth to him for grace. Well, then, study God's name, and answer all your discouragements out of the descriptions of his mercy.

9. Consider your own experiences. We have not only heard that God is merciful, [42] but we have known it. All men may speak of patience, and common mercy, and outward deliverances, but few improve them to a spiritual use and purpose. (1.) Consider God's patience; how long hath he waited for your conversion? and he that hath spared you can save you. It is said, The wages of sin is death.' Rom. vi. 23. The word implieth that God is bound to pay it by virtue of an implicit bargain and agreement between him and the creature. But as yet the hand of God hath not found you out; you are indebted to justice, but mercy stoppeth the arrest of vengeance. Many others have been taken away in their sins by a sudden arrow and dart from heaven; vengeance hath trodden upon the heel of sin; as Zimri and Cosbi unloaded their lusts and their lives together; the angels for an aspiring thought were turned out of heaven; Gehazi was blasted with leprosy just upon his lie; and Lot's wife turned into a stone for a look, a glance upon Sodom; and Herod smitten with lice in the midst of his pomp and vainglory: and some have perished in the midway,' Ps. ii., in the very heat of some carnal and wicked pursuit. God can do the like to you; therefore reason thus: If mercy would not save me, why hath mercy spared me? God might have sued out the bond long since; what is the meaning of the dispensation? Is God weak or unjust? or hath he a mind to be gracious? Surely he would not have spared me all this while, if he had not a mind to save my soul. Such reasonings as these many times give us the first encouragement to apply ourselves to God. Wicked men, like spiders, draw other conclusions, Ps. l. 21. But should not his patience, &c., Rom. ii. 4. (2.) Consider God's goodness in giving thee food, and clothing, and honour, and gladness of heart, and all this without thy desert. Say, Certainly all these benefits are but so many baits to catch my soul. I see the sun riseth every day with a fresh countenance, and

shineth upon the fields of just and unjust; to what purpose, but to show that God is gracious without hire? This bodily sun is but an obscure type of the Sun of Righteousness, that is willing to display his beams and wings over a poor languishing soul. Common mercies are the tastes of God's love while you are sinners, and the common fruits of Christ's death, that you may be invited to come for more. Why hath he given me the unrighteous mammon,' but that I may look after the true riches'? What a vile unthankful heart should I have, if I should be contented with mammon without Christ, and be like Judas, with the bag in my hand, and the devil in my heart! God's children are wont to make these gifts a step to higher dispensations: they know God, like the good householder, bringeth forth the best at last; therefore they must have something above and beyond all these things. Common hearts are contented with common mercies; but they are still waiting when the master of the feast will bid them sit higher. I may have this and be damned; where are the arguments of his special love? (3.) Consider deliverances from imminent dangers. Then the curse began to seize upon you; but God-snatched you out of the fire like brands out of the burning,' Amos iv. 11; or like a debtor that escapeth out of the sergeant's hands. Every deliverance is a temporary pardon: see Ps. lxviii. 38, Then he, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not;' the meaning is, respited vengeance, as appeareth by the context. So Mat. xviii. 32, He forgave them the debt;' yet it was after required; the meaning is, spared them for the present. Thus when God taketh you out of the teeth and jaws of wrath, when you are delivered out of sickness and apparent danger, you have a reprieve or a temporary pardon. Oh! if you had died, you had died in your sins, and so been eternally miserable: if the Lord had taken the present advantage, you had been howling a sad note among the screech-owls of

darkness. For ever blessed be that mercy that made a rescue!

10. Consider God's invitations. Mercy pointeth and beckoneth to thee to come and be saved. How many means hath God used to call thee to himself! Every good motion is a call, every preacher a messenger sent from heaven to invite thee to Christ, every sermon a new summons. Plead with thyself, Though God hath not drawn me, yet he hath warned me. The elect have no more favour in the general means than thou hast. Though God's grace be limited by the pleasure of his wisdom, yet thou hast a fair warrant and encouragement, and every way as good a ground to come to Christ as others have: Whosoever,' &c., John vi. 37. When the gospel doth not exclude me, why should I exclude myself? Doubts that God will not accept me if I come, are but foolish jealousies without a cause.

But it is time to leave off this meditation upon God's mercy, which hath carried me out so far, and to come to the uses.

Use 1. It informeth us that those that would apply themselves to God must make mercy their only plea and claim. Returning sinners have this form put into their mouths, Hosea xiv. 2, Take away all iniquity, receive us graciously,' Lord, we desire to be entertained by mercy, to have our suits dispatched by mercy. So David professeth that he had no other claim: Ps. xiii. 5, I have trusted in thy mercy.' Upon which Chrysostom [43] sweetly glosseth: If any others have any thing to allege, let them plead it; Lord, I have but one thing to say, one thing to plead, one thing upon which I cast all my hopes, and that is thy mercy. So must you come to the throne of grace: Lord, my plea is mercy, all the comfort I expect to receive is from mercy. The apostle, I remember, maketh a challenge: Rom. xi. 35, Who hath first given him, and it shall be recompensed to him again?' Is there any man that can enter this plea, This is due to me? Lord, give me what thou owest, I desire no more; let me have no blessing till I do deserve it.

Merit-mongers [44] are best confuted by experience. Let them use the same plea in their prayers which they do in their disputes; let them say, Give me not eternal life till I deserve it at thy hand; let them dispute thus with God or with their own consciences, when they are in the agonies of death, or under the horrors of the Lord's wrath. Surely men that cry up the merit of works are men of little spiritual experience, and seldom look into their own consciences. Dare they plead thus with God in their agonies and horrors? The best claim God's dearest servants can make is mercy. Possidius, in the life of Austin, reporteth of Ambrose, when he was about to die, he said thus, Though I have not lived so that I should be ashamed to live among you, yet I am not afraid to die; not that I have lived well, but because I have a good and gracious Master. [45] This hath still been the ground of the saints' confidence.

Use 2. It exhorteth us to use this encouragement to bring our souls into the presence of God. Think of the mercies of God; the vile abuse of this doctrine hath brought a suspicion and prejudice upon it: but children must not refuse their bread because dogs catch at it. When Benhadad was dejected, and in danger not only of losing his kingdom but his life, his servants comforted him with this fame, 1 Kings xx. 31, We have heard that the kings of Israel are merciful kings.' You have heard how the God of Israel delighteth in mercy. When you come for mercy, you speak to his very bowels. You shall read in 2 Sam. xiv. 1, that when Joab perceived the king's heart was to Absalom,' then he setteth the woman of Tekoah a-begging. The king's heart is to show mercy; he hath sworn that he hath no pleasure in thy destruction, Ezek. xviii. 32; therefore take courage and come to him. He hath sent Christ to you as a pledge of his good will and mercy; why will you not come to him? He that had love enough to give us Christ, hath bowels enough to give us

pardon, and bounty enough to give us heaven, and whatever we stand in need of. Fear not his justice; justice and mercy are made friends, Rom. iii. 25, 26, and 1 John i. 9. Christ hath taken up the quarrel between them; so that nothing hindereth but that God may act according to the natural inclination of his own grace. And let not the multitude of your sins discourage you: The free gift is of many offences to justification.' Rom. v. 16. Take it for the offences of many persons, as the context seemeth to carry it, and it is an encouragement to think of the multiplied instances of mercy, and how many monuments of free grace we shall see when we come to heaven, and that all this while mercy is not tired. Or take it for the many offences of the same person, and still it is an encouragement that mercy can so often bear with our vanity and folly, and not only pardon several sorts of sin, but frequent relapses into the same sin. He will multiply to pardon,' Isa. lv. 7. If the soul still draw back, and be under discouragement, consider your own need. If the Lord were never so tenacious and hard to be entreated, yet such is your need that you should follow him with incessant complaints. It is blasphemy to wrong his mercy by lessening thoughts. But grant the sinner his supposition, yet you should be instant, and try what he will do for importunity's sake. See Luke xi. 8, dia te` anaidei'an, and Luke xviii. 5, i'na me` upopia'ze me`, &c. In those parables there is a kind of condescension and yielding to our unbelief; as if the Lord had said, If you will not believe all this that is said concerning my mercy, yet your want is great; that is enough to make you earnest and frequent in your addresses to me; come and see what I will do for your importunity; the unjust judge was moved with the widow's clamour: be it as you imagine, that I have no bowels for creatures' miseries, nor ears for their requests, which yet is a blasphemy confuted by every object in the world; the young ravens will

tell you otherwise, Job xxxviii. 41; Mat. vi. 26; Luke xii. 24; but be it so; you are undone if I be not merciful; see what I will do for constant asking. Upon all these encouragements be persuaded to make an essay: faith at first standeth but upon one weak foot. Who knoweth but that God will be gracious?' Jonah iii. 9; Joel ii. 14. There is encouragement enough to venture, though we do not know what will come of it. Take up a resolution to make trial; you will find better welcome than you can expect. God desires to exercise mercy as much as you desire to feel it.

Use 3. It presseth us in all our enjoyments to acknowledge mercy. The saints are wont to do so, Eph. ii. 4; 1 Tim. i. 13; Gen. xxxii. 10; Phil. ii. 27. It is good to refer all things to their head and proper fountain. Everything that we enjoy is the fruit of mercy, especially saving grace. It is a sure sign a man hath received no benefit by grace if his heart be not stirred up to praise it. We have cause to praise God for his mercy above the angels. I mean, not only the bad angels, with whom God entered not into a treaty; he dealt with them in justice and not in mercy; but even the good angels; in some respects we have more cause to bless God than they have. Gratitude respecteth the freeness and graciousness in giving, rather than the greatness of the benefit. God was bountiful to the angels in making them such excellent creatures out of nothing; but he is merciful to us, notwithstanding the demerit of our sins. There was no let in his doing good to the angels; goodness floweth out freely from a holy God to righteous creatures: but wronged justice interposed, and put in a bar against us: so that his justice must be satisfied before mercy can have a free course. We are a generation of sinful men, the wretched offspring of fallen Adam: we had forsaken God, and cast him off, which the angels had not; and therefore, though they have a large experience of God's goodness, yet

they wonder at the grace showed to us, 1 Peter i. 12. But now much more is this mercy to be acknowledged if we consider the difference between us and other men, who, it may be, excelled us in moral accomplishments; but God hath passed them by, choosing us poor things of nought, poor base creatures, that the glory might entirely redound to his own grace. But especially should this mercy affect us. when it hath made a distinction between us and others that were involved in the same guilt; when one is taken and another left;' as the bad thief went to his own place, when the good thief was taken to paradise; and many of God's elect were as deep in sin as those in hell. I say, in all such cases we should still be crying out Mercy, mercy; for certainly justice could make no such distinction; it awardeth a like punishment to all that are found in a like crime; but God's infinite and eternal mercy only maketh the difference.

Use 4. It is caution. Do not wrong grace and mercy, if it be the cause of all the good which we enjoy. This is to close up the fountain, and to make mercy our enemy; and if mercy be our enemy, who shall plead for us? If mercy be an accuser, where shall we get an advocate? But how do we wrong grace? I answer--Partly by neglecting the offers of it, when you make God speak in vain, 2 Cor. vi. 2. It is a great affront we put upon God, to despise him when he speaketh to us in the still voice, and all the wooings and pleadings of mercy do not move to look after our salvation; though you do not despise, there is danger in bare neglect, Heb. ii. 3. [46] When all the charms of mercy do no more work with you than a story of golden mountains, or rubies and diamonds fallen from heaven in a night dream, this neglect argueth a greater suspicion and distrust of God's mercy than doubts and troubles of conscience do. Mercy speaketh to them, and they do not think the message worth the hearing or regarding. Again, you wrong grace by refusing it out of

legal dejection, for by this means you straiten the riches, and darken the glory of it; as if there were not more in grace than there is in sin, or as if an emperor's revenue could not discharge a beggar's debt. The prodigal could say, there was bread enough in his father's house.' If we perish, it is not for want of mercy, but for want of faith. Grace is God's treasure; he is rich in mercy,' Eph. ii. 4. As far as we straiten grace, we make him a poorer God. Again, we wrong grace and mercy by intercepting the glory of it. It is the greatest sacrilege that can be to rob God of his glory, especially of the glory of his grace;' for that is his great aim in all his transactions with man, to make his grace and mercy glorious; see Eph. i. 6. Now when you think God accepteth you rather than others for some worth and good qualities that he seeth in you more than others, it may be in this light of the gospel which we now enjoy such thoughts are not expressed, but if they lurk secretly in the heart, you think God foresaw you would bring him more glory, Deut. ix. 4; you take the crown from grace's head, and put it upon your own. So also you wrong grace when you ascribe anything to your power and strength. As Joab sent for David to take the honour of winning Rabbah: 2 Sam. xii. 28, Lest I take the city, and it be called after my own name;' so send for God to take the honour: Not I, but grace,' 1 Cor. xv. 10. Throw the crown at grace's feet. The industrious servant said, Thy pound hath gained ten pounds,' Luke xix. 16; not my industry, but thy pound. Once more, we wrong grace by turning it into wantonness; see ver. 4. It is made there to be a heavy charge and black note when men presume on grace, and use it only as a dung-cart to carry away their filth. Grace must bear all, and pardon all; as riotous children that have a rich father care not how they spend; his estate shall pay for all. It is a mighty wrong to grace this, when you make it pliable to such vile purposes, and father the bastards of your own

carnal hearts upon gospel encouragements. It is the devil's covenant, not God's, when you think that you may live as you list, be at your own dispose, and mercy shall be at your beck, and you shall have comfort when you please; and that you may sin freely because God pardoneth freely, as if mercy gave you a privilege and liberty to sin. In short, if a man slacken any part of his duty for mercy's sake, or lets loose the reins to vile affections with more freedom, upon the presumption that God will not be rigorous, he wrongeth grace exceedingly. I say, if he grow more careless, secure, negligent, not so constant in duty, not so watchful and strict in conversation, or abateth aught of his humiliation for sin, he is a spider that sucketh poison out of this flower. Lastly, we wrong grace by slighting it after a taste. At first coming to Christ we make an essay and trial, and usually then God giveth us a taste to engage us to look for more, 1 Peter ii. 3; Heb. vi. 4-6. Now after trial you are not satisfied, but return to your sinful courses again, and so do, as it were, proclaim to the world that you found carnal comforts and pleasures to be better than communion with God. This is but the interpretation of your apostasy. The whole aim of the word is to persuade us to make trial of the sweetness of grace. Now you that have once tasted of it, and grow weary, do by your practice tell the world that there is no sweetness in it at all, which is a great wrong to grace and mercy.

It is high time now to speak of the second thing prayed for, which is peace; whence observe that peace is a great blessing, one of the main privileges of the gospel.

I shall, first, Show you what it is; secondly, Give you some obser vations concerning it; and thirdly, Come to application.

1. What it is. It is a tranquillity of mind arising from the sense of a sure estate with God. To this peace two things concur. First, a sure

estate, or terms of amity with God. This is called in scripture peace with God,' and is the immediate effect and fruit of actual justification, Rom. v. 1. And then, secondly, there is a sense of this sure estate, or the reflex of this amity upon the conscience, and is usually called peace of conscience,' and is a special privilege of Christ's spiritual kingdom. See Rom. xiv. 17; the apostle speaketh there of a peace,' which is ranked with joy in the Holy Ghost.' But it will be better opened to you in the ensuing propositions.

[1.] Man by nature is at enmity with God, and upon ill terms with him. When we lost God's image, we lost his favour. This enmity is mutual; man is an enemy to God, and God is an enemy to man. On God's part there is wrath, which is all that we are born to by nature, Eph. ii. 3; and on man's part there is hatred; we hate God because we love sin, Col. i. 21. God's enmity is suspended in the day of his patience. Now and then wrath breaketh out, but it is not executed to the full; sentence is passed, but not executed. Nay, it may be reversed if we take sanctuary at grace; for God is now upon a treaty with us, or offer of peace; therefore it is said peace on earth,' Luke ii. 14. The next world is a time of vengeance and recompense; but during our earthly state God wooeth us and inviteth us to lay down the weapons of our defiance, and accept of terms of peace. Thus matters stand on God's part. But now on our part this enmity is carried on with a great deal of spite. We seek to destroy God, and to deface all the memorials of him that are impressed upon the conscience; we ungod him in our thoughts and affections. It is a pleasing thought to us to suppose if there were no God, as guilty prisoners wish there were no judge, no assizes, that they may not be called to account.

[2.] Man being at enmity with God, all God's creatures are at enmity with him. Angels, men, fire, air, water, they are all at God's beck,

and are ready to destroy man whenever the Lord biddeth them; as good subjects take part with their prince against rebels. The angels hearken for the voice of his word,' Ps. ciii. If he do but hiss for the fly of Egypt,' Isa. vii. 18, it is ready presently. It is ill contesting with him that can command legions. The fire saith, Let me burn his house or dwelling-place; the water saith, Let me drown his ships; the earth, Let me swallow him up quick, as I did Korah and his accomplices. Certainly the Lord cannot want instruments of vengeance. Man as God's creature is his own enemy. God needeth not fetch forces from without, there is enough within; the humours of the body, the passions of the mind, all these are willing to serve God as creatures for our punishment; so that if God should but arm our own thoughts, our own affections against us, man is soon overwhelmed. Who can bear the wounds given him by his own conscience?

[3.] We, being in this estate, can only be reconciled by Jesus Christ. He obtaineth it by his merit, and conferreth it by his power. For his merit, see Col. i. 20, and Isa. liii. 5, The chastisement of our peace was upon him.' It will not stand with the majesty of God to make peace with us without satisfaction. That there might be no wrong done to his sovereignty, his law, his truth, his justice, his holiness, it was meet that we should be chastised either in our own persons or in our surety; and also all the notions of the Godhead are kept inviolable. Then for his power: He worketh it at first, and then maintaineth and keepeth it afoot between God and us. He worketh it at first, and bringeth it about thus, by opening the gospel, wherein God is revealed as pacified in Christ; which is the only doctrine that can calm the conscience, and establish the soul in peace and hope. All false religions are accompanied with scruples and jealousies: Jer. vi. 16, there is no rest for the soul.' And then he applieth the gospel by his Spirit. The

gospel is a sovereign plaster, but Christ's own hand must make it stick. There is a double ground of enmity in man's heart--the guilt and power of sin. Christ wipeth guilt out of the conscience by the application of his own blood, and weakeneth the power of sin more and more. Sin is the makebate, and Christ is the Prince of peace,' Isa. ix. 6. The great end for which God set him up, was to plant grace in our hearts, and so to work a friendship between God and us. But Christ is not only the author, but the great conservator of the peace between us and heaven. Partly by his intercession: as foreign states have their agents in princes' courts to preserve a mutual correspondence, so Christ taketh up all differences that fall out between us and God, that no breach may ensue, Heb. ix. 24. Partly by a further declaration of God's love to the conscience, Isa. xxvi. 3. Partly by stirring us up to watchfulness, that no occasion may be given on our part by returning to folly,' Ps. lxxxv. 8. Thus you see what Christ doth: all is briefly summed up by the apostle in 2 Cor. v. 19, God was in Christ reconciling the world.' Where note, that our peace with God is a reconciliation or a peace after a breach, and this reconciliation is mutual. God appeareth in a form of grace and mercy to us, and we lay down our enmity against God; he is gracious to us, and we love and serve him. Only observe, that God beginneth first, though he be the wronged party; he was reconciling.' And mark again, it is in Christ' to show it is sure. Those that are reconciled to men are still in umbrage and suspicion with them; they that have once been enemies, they may be again; therefore they do not return to perfect grace; [47] when the wound is cured, the scars remain. But our reconciliation with God, it is like the soldering of a vessel, which is strongest in the crack; or as a leg broken, if well set, it is the stronger; so are we upon firmer terms than we were in innocency; there was a possibility of being at

odds with God, which is now taken away.

[4.] God being reconciled in Christ, all things else are at peace with us, tranquillus Deus tranquillat omnia. For his league with us is offensive and defensive: My horses are as thy horses, and my chariots as thy chariots.' God and all his confederates are in the league, or rather God and all his subjects, as a prince doth not only contract for his person, but his subjects and estates. Angels are at peace with us; instead of being instruments of vengeance, they become ministering spirits,' Heb. i. 14. A Christian hath an invisible guard; Satan is sensible of it, though we be not; he saith of Job, Thou hast hedged him round about.' God's heirs are well attended; angels wait upon them at Christ's direction. Other creatures serve us, as if they were in league and covenant with us; stars, winds, seas, beasts: Job v. 23, Thou shalt be in league with the stones of the field, and the beasts shall be at peace with thee.' They are included in God's league, which is as much as if there were an express covenant between us and them that they shall not do us harm: they are at the beck of providence, and therefore, so far as it conduceth to our good, at our service. So Hosea ii. 18, I will make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and the fowls of the heaven,' &c. So for men; they are wolves one to another, yet God can change them. The gospel civiliseth, and pulleth the beast out of men's bosoms where it worketh least, [48] see Isa. xi. 7-9. The hearts of men are in God's hands; he can either destroy their persons, or restrain their rage, or turn out their respects to you: When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh his enemies to be at peace with him,' Prov. xvi. 7. We think to carry all by force and violence many times, but obedience to God is the best way to gain the respects of men, as a key openeth a door sooner than an iron bar. If you be in with God, you stop enmity and strife at the fountainhead. So for peace

with the saints; Jesus Christ breaketh down the partition wall, Eph. ii. 16-18, removeth prejudices and jealousies, changeth interests, cleareth up truths, and by his Spirit meekeneth their hearts that they may be at one. Surely his blood is the best cement and bond of friendship. [49] Christ hath called us into a body, that there might be peace in the church, Col. iii. 15. Brothers have defaced the feelings of nature, but fellow-members are wont to care one for another. Peace with fellow-saints was his dying charge, his legacy, John xiv. 27, his prayer, John xvii., and his constant care now he is in heaven. Then for peace with ourselves. Sin rendeth and teareth a man from himself; it maketh a mutiny in his own heart, Rom. ii. 15, thoughts accusing and excusing by turns,' met' alle'lon. A man and his conscience are at odds, and a man and his affections. Now, we being reconciled to God, the foundation is laid for peace of conscience, that we and our hearts may talk together as loving friends, without scolding, without reproaching. And then grace giveth us a calm and contented spirit, which easeth us of a great deal of trouble, for a discontented man is his own burden. We need the peace of God not only in our consciences, but to bear rule in our hearts, Col. iii. 16, that we may refer all matters to God's disposal, Ps. iv. 8.

[5.] Though all things are at peace with us; yet some troubles are left for our exercise, but not for our hurt and destruction. The peace of God it is a very riddle: Phil. iv. 7, It passeth all understanding.' To sense who more wretched than God's children, hated, reviled, persecuted, afflicted? How are they at peace with God and all his creatures? I answer--The privileges of Christ's kingdom are spiritual: whatever troubleth the saints, nothing can harm them, 1 Peter iii. 13. They may harm the man, but not the Christian. All things are at peace with them, because they are at the disposal of a wise and gracious

providence, and cannot do hurt to the better part: they work for good. Death is at peace with them, which doth the greatest hurt to the body. Ask old Simeon and he will tell you so: Luke ii. 29, Lord, now lettest thy servant depart in peace,' &c. They are sent for by their friend; the king of fears is a grim messenger, but they know his errand, and therefore are not afraid.

[6.] In heaven there is a perfect peace; in the new Jerusalem all is quiet: It is just with God to give you that are troubled, a'nesin, rest,' 2 Thes. i. 7; and there is a rest that remaineth for the children of God,' Heb. iv. 9. There we rest both from our sorrows and our labours; there is no trouble nor affliction more; all privileges are at the height; no more apprehensions of God's wrath, fears of death. There we are not only free from hurt, but danger; our exercise is at an end: there we do immediately behold the king's face, which is not granted us here; now we are in Absalom's condition, pardoned, reconciled, but cannot see the king's face. So much for the nature of this peace, and the observations that open it to you. Let us now apply all.

Use 1. If peace be such an excellent blessing, and a main privilege of the gospel, then it puts us upon trial. Are we at peace with God through Christ? If it be so, then--(1.) Enmity is laid aside; God's enemies will be yours, and yours will be God's; otherwise what peace? What! do we talk of peace with God, as long as we are in league with God's enemy? What peace as long as the whoredoms of thy mother Jezebel are so many?' Our league with God is defensive and offensive. There is a war with Satan, [50] if we be at peace with God: the spiritual conflict is the best evidence we have of our unity with God. With the wicked, God is at open war: There is no peace,' &c., Isa. lvii. 21. The devil may be at a secret peace with them, but God is at a distance, and

abhorreth all communion with them. Christ is called the Prince of peace,' Isa. ix. 6; but it is to those that submit to his government; to his subjects, he saith, Take my yoke upon yon, and ye shall find rest,' Mat. xi. 29. We are not in a capacity to receive this blessing till we take an oath of allegiance to Christ, and continue in obedience to him. (2.) The next note is, delight in communion with God: Job xxii. 21, Acquaint thyself with him, and be at peace.' A man that is at peace with God will be often in his company: bondage and servile awe keepeth us out of God's presence; we cannot come to him, because we cannot come in peace. A man never delighteth in duties of commerce with God when either he hath a false peace or no peace: duties disturb a false peace; and when we are raw and sour, we are unfit for work. When a peace is concluded between nations that were before at war, trading is revived: so will it be between God and you; commerce will be revived, and you will be trading into heaven, that you may bring away rich treasures of grace and comfort.

Use 2. It presseth us to make peace with God by Christ. We speak to two sorts--the careless and the distressed. (1.) To the careless. Consider you are born enemies to God: they that loved him from their cradle upward, never loved him. You must make peace with God, for you cannot maintain war against him: Are you stronger than he?' What! will you arm lusts against angels? And do you know the terror of his wrath? One spark of it is enough to drink up all your blood and spirits, Job vi. 4. The present life is but a vapour, soon gone. If God be angry, he can arm the least creature to kill you: the whole creation taketh part with God: Adrian was strangled with a gnat. But death will not end your sorrows. None can punish their enemies as God can; he can ruin your body and soul for ever and for ever. How will you screech and howl like dragons? But your torments are without end and without ease. Be wise,

then, and do not sleep when your damnation sleepeth not,' 2 Peter ii. 3; now is the time to make your peace with God. Ah! that you knew in this your day the things that belong to your peace,' Luke xix. 41. Peace must be had now, or else it can never be had hereafter. The day of patience will not always last; therefore let us get into the ark before the flood cometh. It is a dreadful thing to be under the wrath of God, and you know not how soon it will light: our care should be to be found of him in peace,' Peter iii. 14. Christ is now a Saviour, then a judge: you will yell and howl for mercy when it is too late. (2.) I am to speak to distressed consciences. Lift up your heads, God offereth you peace; he sent angels from heaven to proclaim it, Luke ii. 14. The ground of the offer is good-will, and the end of the offer is only his own glory. God hath no other reasons to move him to it but his own good-will, and no other aim than to glorify his grace; see Eph. i. 6; and therefore take hold of his covenant of peace, as it is called, Isa. liv. 10. He is content we shall have peace upon these terms, and peace assured us by covenant. Certainly it is not a duty to doubt, nor a thing accept able to God, that we should always be upon terms of perplexity, and keep conscience raw with a sense of wrath and sin: wherefore did Christ bear the chastisement of our peace'? God is more pleased with a cheerful confidence than a servile spirit, full of bondage and fear.

Use 3. It is caution. If peace be a privilege of the gospel, let us take care that we settle upon a right peace, lest we mistake a judgment for a blessing. It is the greatest judgment that can be, to _be given up to our own secure presumptions, and to be lulled asleep with a false peace. When the pulse doth not beat, the body is in a dangerous estate; so when conscience is benumbed, and smiteth not, it is very sad. The grounds of a false and carnal peace are--(1.) Ignorance of our

condition. Many go hoodwinked to hell; a little light breaking in would trouble all, Rom. vii. 9. Sluttish corners are not seen in the dark. Things are naught that cannot brook a trial; [51] so you may know that it is very bad with men when they will not come to the light,' John iii. 20, or cannot endure to be alone, lest conscience should return upon itself, and they be forced to look inward; their confidence is supported by mere ignorance. (2.) Sensuality. Some men's lives are nothing else but a diversion from one pleasure to another, that they may put off that which they cannot put away; there is bondage in their consciences, and they are loath to take notice of it: Amos vi. 3, They drink wine in bowls, and put far away the evil day.' This is to quench the spirit' without a metaphor. All their pleasures are but stolen waters, and bread eaten in secret;' frisks of mirth when they can get conscience asleep. Cain's heart was a trouble to him, therefore he falleth a-building of cities. Saul, to cure the evil spirit, ran to his music; and so usually men choke conscience either with business or pleasures. (3.) From formality and slightness in the spiritual life. First, either they do not seriously perform duty; that will make men see what carnal, unsavoury, sapless spirits they have. He that never stirreth doth not feel the lameness of his joints. Formal duties make men the more secure; as the Pharisee thought himself in a good case, because, &c., Luke xviii. 11; but spiritual duties search us to the purpose, as new wine doth old bottles. Or else, secondly, they do not exasperate their lusts, and seriously resist sin. Tumult is made by opposition. When a man yieldeth to Satan, no wonder that Satan lets him alone: Luke xi. 21, The goods are in peace,' because the devil's possession is not disturbed; he rageth most when his kingdom is tottering, Rev. xii. 12. Please the worst natures, and they will not trouble you. There is no tempest where wind and tide go together. You

let Satan alone, and he lets you alone; this is a peace that will end in trouble.

I now come to speak of the third thing prayed for, and that is love, which, being taken here, not for God's love to us, but our love to God, may be thus defined:--It is a gracious and holy affection, which the soul, upon the apprehension of God's love in Christ, returneth back to God again by his own grace. The grounds and causes of it are two; the one worketh by way of argument and suasion, the other by way of efficacy and power.

1. It ariseth from the sense and apprehensions of God's love in Christ. Love is like a diamond, that is not wrought upon but by its own dust: 1 John iv. 19, We love him, because he loved us first.' Love is like an echo, it returneth what it receiveth; it is a reflex, a reverberation, or a casting back of God's beam and flame upon himself. The cold wall sendeth back no reflex of heat till the sun shine upon it, and warm it first; so neither do we love God till the soul be first filled with a sense of his love. And as radius reflexus languet, rays in their reflection are more faint and cold, so our love to God is much weaker than God's love to us. Valdesso saith, God loveth the lowest saint more than the highest angel loveth God. Once more, the more direct the stroke and beam is upon the wall, or any other solid body, the stronger always is the reflection; so the more sense we have of the love of God, the stronger is our love to him.

2. The next cause of love is the grace of God. There is not only an apprehension of love, but the force of the spirit goeth along with it. Our thoughts, our discourses upon the love of God to us in Christ, nay, our sense and feeling of it, is not enough to beget this grace in us. Love is a pure flame, that must be kindled from above, as the vestal fire by a sunbeam: 1 John iv. 7, Love is of God;' that is, of a

celestial or heavenly original. There is in the soul naturally a hatred of God, Rom. i. 30, theostugeis, and a proneness to mingle with present comforts, which can only be cured by the Spirit of grace. Our naked apprehensions will not break the force of natural enmity; and it is God that must circumcise and pare away the foreskin of the heart before we can love him, Deut. xxx. 6. There is a natural proneness to dote upon the creature and hate the Creator. Base creatures neglect God, and pollute themselves with one another; and there is no help for it till the heart be overpowered by grace. Thus for the causes of love.

The object of love is God himself; not merely as considered in himself, for so he is terrible to the creature, but as God in Christ, for so he will be known and respected by us in the gospel, and so we have the highest engagement to love him; not only upon the respects of nature, as our Creator, but of grace, as our God and father in Christ. Now God is the supreme object of love, and other things are loved for God's sake, because of that of God which we find in them; as his word, which is the copy of his holiness, his engraven image, as the coin beareth the image of the prince. So it is said, Ps. cxix. 47, I will delight myself in thy commandments which I have loved.' And then his saints, which are his living image, as children resemble their father; so it is said, Ps. xvi. 3, To the saints, and to the excellent of the earth, in whom is my delight.' And then other men, because of his command, 2 Peter i. 5, Add to brotherly kindness, love.' So his creatures, because in them we enjoy God, the effects of his bounty. But chiefly his ordinances, as they exhibit more of God than the creatures can. So that love respects God, and other things for God's sake.

Again, in the description I take notice of the essence or formal nature of it, and call it the return of a gracious and holy affection to God.

Love is carried out to its object two ways--by desire and delight. Our

necessity and need of God is the ground of desire; and our propriety and interest is the ground of delight. Desires are the feet of love, by which it runneth after its object; and delight is the rest and contentment of the soul in the enjoyment of it. Because of our imperfect fruition in this life, love bewrayeth itself by desires mostly, or pursuing after God; see Ps. lxiii. 8, My heart followeth hard after thee.' It noteth those sallies and earnest egressions of soul after the Lord, that we may have more communion and fellowship with him. In short, the radical (if I may so speak) and principal disposition of love is a desire of union; for all other effects of love flow from it This it is that makes the soul to prize the ordinances, because God is. to be enjoyed there, and these are means of communion with him: Ps. xxvi. 8, I have loved the place where thine honour dwelleth.' This maketh sin terrible, because it separateth from God, Isa. lix. 2. This maketh heaven amiable; the fairest part of our portion in heaven is a closer and nearer communion with Christ, Phil. i. 23. This maketh the day of judgment sweet, for then we shall meet with our beloved in the air,' 1 Thes. iv. 17. In short, this maketh the soul to take such contentment in thinking of God, and speaking of God; it is the feast of the soul: My meditation of him shall be sweet,' Ps. civ. 34. Their souls cannot have a greater solace than to think what a God they have in Christ.

Having in some manner described the love of God, let me use some arguments to press you to it.

First, God hath commanded it; the sum of the law is love. When the scribe came to Christ, Mat. xxii. 36, Master, which is the great commandment in the law?' Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and all thy soul, and all thy might,' Mark, this is the first and great commandment,' to love God; it is not a sour

command, but sweet and profitable. God might have burdened us with other manner of precepts, considering his absolute right; to offer our children in sacrifice, to mangle our flesh with whips and scourges; but these are cruelties proper to the devil's worship. The Lord is a gentle master, and only desireth the love of his servants; we have cause to thank him for such a gracious precept. If he should require us not to love him, this were hell itself; that is the hell of hell, that they which are there do not love God. It is our privilege as much as our duty. God loveth all his creatures, but hath commanded none to love him again but man and angels; so that it is the great privilege of the saints to love God. It had been a great favour if God had given us leave to love him; as it would be a great favour if a king should give leave to one of his meanest subjects to have the key of his privy chamber, to come to him and visit him, and be familiar with him when he pleaseth; how would this be talked of in the world! Yet this is not so wonderful, since the king and the peasant are both men; in their natural being they are equal, though in their civil distinction and condition of life there be a difference. But what a favour is this, that he who is the King of kings, and Lord of lords,' doth not only permit his creature made by his own hands to come to him, and love him, and deal with him when he pleaseth, but hath expressly commanded it! Nay, this is the great commandment.' Certainly God is very desirous of our love, when he layeth such an obligation upon us. Was there ever such a master, that made this to be his servants' chiefest duty, that they should love him? Again, I observe in God's command that the precept runneth thus: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.' The Lord would not lose one grain of the creature's love. Surely he valued it when he is so solicitous about it. If we should see a wise man careful to

preserve the relics of what we counted a neglected weed, it would make us think there were some what in it. We lavish away our love upon trifles, and God prizeth every grain of it. You see he speaketh as if he would not lose one dust of love: All thy soul, all thy heart, and all thy might.' When he biddeth us love our neighbour, he sets limits to it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself;' but when he biddeth us love God, he requireth all the heart. The only measure is to love him without measure. The next place that I shall take notice of, where the precept is recorded, is Deut. x. 12, And now Israel, what doth the Lord require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, and to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord with all thy heart, and with all thy soul.' God doth not require of us things without the sphere of duty; that we should go into the depths of the sea, toss mountains in the air, pluck the stars from heaven, &c. These things lie out of the power of man. He doth not require of us barbarous austerities--to offer our first-born, to lance ourselves, to mangle our flesh with whips and scourges. He doth not require of us absolutely such things which some men can and ought to perform; not such a measure of alms, what then would become of the poor? not such a degree of wisdom and learning, what then would become of the simple and unlearned? But, O Israel, what hath the Lord required of thee, but that thou shouldest love the Lord thy God?' A duty to be performed by poor and rich, learned and unlearned. Whatever their estate and condition be, they may all love God. There are many in heaven that never were in a condition to give, but to receive, that were never learned and skilled in sciences; but none that never loved God.

Secondly, God hath deserved love. Let us a little take notice of God's love to us. He beginneth and loveth us that we may love him again, 1 John iv. 19. If God should hate us, we were bound to love him, because

of his excellency, and because of our duty and obligation as we are creatures. How much more when God hath loved us, and bestowed so many benefits upon us? Love is an affection which God will have repaid in kind. When he chideth us, he doth not expect that we should chide him again. When he judgeth us, we must not judge him again. In these things the creature is not to retaliate. It is true, we do it too often, but still to our loss and blame. But now when he loveth us, he willeth us to love him again. He loveth us for no other cause but that he may be loved. Love must be paid in kind. As water is cast into a pump when the springs lie low to bring up more water, so God sheddeth abroad his love into our hearts, that our love may rise up to him again by way of gratitude and recompense. Now in the love of God we may take notice of--(1.) The properties; and (2.) The effects of it.

First, For the properties of God's love, consider:--

1. The ancientness of it: Ps. ciii. 17, From everlasting to everlasting,' &c. With reverence we may speak, ever since God was God he was our God. You may track his love from one eternity to another. Before the world was he loved us, and when the world is no more he loveth us still. His love began in eternal purposes of grace, and it endeth in our eternal possession of glory. It is not a thing of yester day. He is our ancient friend. He loved us not only before we were lovely, but before we were at all. We adjourn and put off our love of God to old age, and thrust it into a narrow corner. When we have wasted and spent our strength in the world, we dream of a devout retirement. But the Lord thinketh he could never love us early enough. From everlasting to everlasting,' &c. We receive the fruits and effects of love in time, but all cometh out of God's ancient and eternal love. This grace was provided for us before we were born. Yea, look upon God's love in time. How merciful was God to us before we could show the

least sign of thankfulness to him? He loved us a long time before ever we had a thought of him. In infancy we could not so much as know that he loved us. When we came to years of discretion we knew how to offend him before we knew how to love and serve him. How many are there of whom it may be said, God is not in all their thoughts;' and yet all this while God hath thoughts of peace' and blessing towards them.

2. Consider the freeness of God's love. The value of all benefits ariseth from the necessity of him that receive th, and the good-will of him that giveth. God wanted not us, our love is no benefit to him; but we wanted him, we are undone without him. Yet he hath more delight in pardoning than we in salvation, and he is more ready to give than we to ask. [52] He often calleth upon us to call upon him; as if he were afraid we would not ask, or not enough, or not soon enough, or not often enough. A man would think that our wants should be importunate enough to put us upon requests, and that we needed not enforcements to prayer; yet you see God doth not only prevent the request, but make the prayer, and stirreth us up to utter it. But we are not only needy creatures, but guilty creatures; and that God should love us 1 When we were in our blood and filthiness, it was a time of loves,' Ezek. xvi.

7. This is the great miracle of divine love, that a time of loathing is a time of loves. And we will wonder at it more if we consider the active and endless hatred of his holiness against sin, and therefore why not against sinners? The holiness of his nature and essence sets him against them; and natural antipathies and aversions can never be reconciled, as a man can never be brought to delight in a toad, or a lamb in a wolf. And consider again his infinite wisdom. We may love that which is not lovely, because we are often blinded by inordinate affection; but now God's love is not blind and overcome with the vehemency of any passion, as man's is. This maketh the wonder, there is

no blindness and passion in him that loveth, and yet the thing that is loved is vile and uncomely.

3. The frequency of the expressions of his love. It would weary the arm of an angel to write down God's repeated acts of grace: Rom. v. 16, The free gift is of many offences unto justification.' We carry loads of experiences with us to heaven. God's book of remembrance is written within and without. This will be our wonder and amazement at the last day, to see such huge sums cancelled with Christ's blood: every day pardoning mercy is put in: our past lives are but a constant experience of our sinning and God's pardoning. We are weary of everything but sin; we are never weary of that, because it is natural to us. The very refreshments of life by continuance grow burden some: meat, drink, music, sleep, the chiefest pleasures, within a while need to be refreshed with other pleasures; man is a restless creature, and loveth shift and change. But now we are never weary of sin; we have it from the womb, and we keep it to the grave; and yet all this while we subsist upon God. We subsist upon him every moment; we have life, and breath, and hourly maintenance from him, whom we thus grieve and offend. Dependence should beget observance, but in us it is otherwise. As a dunghill sendeth out vapours to obscure the sun that shineth upon it, so do we dishonour the God of our mercies, and grieve him day by day. How long hath God been multiplying pardons, and yet free grace is not tired and grown weary!

4. Consider the variety of the expressions of his love. We have all kind of mercies; we eat mercy, we wear mercy, we are encompassed with mercy as with a shield.' The apostle saith, 2 Peter i. 3, He hath given us all things that pertain to life and godliness;' that is, as I would interpret, all things that are necessary to life natural, to life spiritual, to maintain grace here, and to bring us to glory here after.

He that hath an interest in Christ, his portion is not straitened; be hath a right to all things, and a possession of as much as providence judgeth needful; therein we must not be our own carvers. A man of mortified affections thinketh he hath provision enough if he hath things necessary to life and godliness; and will you not love God for all this? Certainly we do not want obligations, but we want affections. Look, as too much wood puts out the fire and causeth smoke, so the multitude and daily experience of God's mercies lesseneth the esteem of them. We have but too many mercies, and that maketh us unkind and neglectful of God. What shall I tell you of sabbaths, ordinances, food, raiment? If a man would be but his own remembrancer, and now and then come to an account with God, he would cry out, O the multitude of thy thoughts to us-ward, how great is the sum of them!' Ps. cxxxix. 17. Or if a man would but keep a journal of his own life, what a vast volume would his private experiences make; how would he find mercy and himself still growing up together! Shall I show you a little what a multitude of mercies there are? I will not speak of the higher and choicer mercies, such as concern the soul, but of such as concern the body. What a deal of provision is there for the comfort and welfare of the body! I instance in these mercies, partly because they are so common that they are scarce noted; partly because carnal men prize the body most; they prefer it above the soul. Now the Lord would leave them without excuse; they that love the body shall not want arguments to urge them to love God, since he hath bestowed so much of his love and care upon the body, to gratify all the senses not only for necessity but delight. There is light for the eye; the poorest man hath glorious lamps to light him to his labours; for the taste, such variety of refreshments of a different sap and savour; for the smell, delicious infusions into the air from flowers and gums and aromatic plants; for

the ears, music from birds and men; and all this to make our pilgrimage comfortable, and our hearts better. How many creatures hath the Lord given us to help to hear burdens? how many things for meat and medicine? If man had not been created last, after the world was settled and furnished, we should have seen the want of many things which we now enjoy and do not value. First God provided our house, and then furnished our table; and when all was ready, then man is brought in as the lord of all. We are not affected with these mercies. How can we sin against God, that can look no where but we see arguments and reasons to love him? As Christ said, Many good works have I done amongst you; for which of these do you stone me?' so may the Lord plead, I have done many things for you; you cannot open your eyes but you see love, you cannot walk abroad but you smell love and hear love, &c.; for which of those do you grieve me, and deal so despitefully with me?

Secondly, Let me now come to the effects of God's love. I shall only instance in those three great effects--creation, preservation, and redemption. Certainly that must needs be a great bonfire out of which there flies not only sparks but brands; and so that love which can produce such fruits and effects must needs be exceeding great.

1. Creation. This deserveth love from the creature. The fruit of the vineyard belongeth to him that planted it; and whom should we love but him that gave us the power to love? All that thou hast, all that thou canst see, that thou canst touch, is his gift, and the work of his hands. He gave thee the essence not of a tree, a bird, a beast, but of a man, capable of reason, fit for happiness. God made other creatures by a word of command, and man by counsel. It was not, Be thou, but, Let us make man, to show that the whole Trinity assisted and joined in consultation. He made other creatures for his glory, but not for his love and service. God is glorified in them passively, as they give us

occasion to glorify God; the creatures are the harp, but man maketh the music: All thy works praise thee, and thy saints bless thee,' Ps. cxlv. 10. How many steps may a Christian ascend in his praise and thanksgiving! We might have been stones without sense; beasts, and without reason; born infidels, and without faith; we might have continued sinners, and without grace: all these are so many steps of mercy. But creation is that we are now to speak of, and truly it deserveth a remembrance, especially in youth, Eccles. xii. 1, when the effects of God's creating bounty are most fresh in our sense and feeling: we are always to remember our Creator,' but then especially. The aches of old age serve to put us in mind of our ingratitude; but the strength, and vigour, and freshness of youth should make us remember the bounty of our Creator. Look upon the body or the soul, and you will see that we have cause to love him. In the body we find as many mercies as there are limbs. If a man should be born blind or lame, or should lose an eye or an arm, or a leg, how much would he love him that should restore the use of these members again! We are as much bound to love him that gave them to us at first, especially when we consider how often we have deserved to lose them. We would love him that should raise us from the dead: God is the author of life, and the continual preserver and defender of it. If we love our parents that begot us, we should much more love God that made them and us too out of nothing. Take notice of the curious frame of the body. David saith, Ps. cxxxix. 14, I am wonderfully made;' acu pictus sum, so the Vulgar rendereth it, painted as with a needle,' like a garment of needlework, of divers colours, richly embroidered with nerves and veins. What shall I speak of the eye, wherein there is such curious workmanship, that many upon the first sight of it have been driven to acknowledge God? Of the hand made to open and shut, and to serve the labours and ministries

of nature without wasting and decay for many years? If they should be of marble or iron, with such constant use they would soon wear out; and yet now they are of flesh they last as long as life lasteth. Of the head? fitly placed to be the seat of the senses, to command and direct the rest of the members. Of the lungs? a frail piece of flesh, yet, though in continual motion, of a long use. It were easy to enlarge upon this occasion; but I am to preach a sermon, not to read an anatomy lecture. In short, therefore, every part is so placed and framed, as if God had employed his whole wisdom about it.

But as yet we have spoken but of the casket wherein the jewel lieth. The soul, that divine spark and blast, how quick, nimble, various, and indefatigable in its motions! how comprehensive in its capacities! how it animateth the body, and is like God himself, all in every part! Who can trace the flights of reason? What a value hath God set upon the soul! He made it after his image, he redeemed it with Christ's blood, &c. Well, then, God, that made such a body, such a soul, deserveth love. He that made the soul hath most right to dwell in it; it is a curious house of his own framing. But he will not enter by force and violence, but by consent; he expecteth when love will give up the keys: Rev. iii. 20, Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man open to me, I will come in and sup with him.' Why should Christ stand at the door and knock, and ask leave to enter into his own house? He hath right enough to enter, only he expecteth till we open to him.

2. Preservation. We are not apprehensive enough of daily mercies. The preservation of the world is a constant miracle. The world is hanged upon nothing' (as it is in the book of Job). A feather will not stay in the air; and yet what hath the world to support it but the thin fluid air that is round about it? It is easy to prove that the waters are higher than the land; so that we are always in the case the Israelites

were in when they passed through the Red Sea. Nos sumus etiam tanquam in medio rubri maris, saith Luther--the waters are round about us and above us, bound up in a heap as it were by God, and yet we are not swallowed up. It is true the danger is not so sensible and immediate as that of the Red Sea, because of the constant rampire of providence. More particularly, from the womb to the grave we have hourly maintenance from God. Look, as the beams in the air are no longer continued than the sun shineth; so we do no longer continue than God upholdeth our beings by the word of his power,' Heb. i. 3. Or as it is with a seal in the water, take away the seal and the impress vanisheth; so do we disappear as soon as God doth but loosen his hand and almighty grasp, by which all things are upheld and preserved. But let us speak of those acts of providence that are more sensible. Into how many diseases and dangers might we fall, if God did not look after us as the nurse after her child! How many have gone to the grave, nay, it may be to hell, since the last night*! How many actual dangers have we escaped! God hath looked after us, as if he had forgotten all the world besides; as if his whole employment were to do us good. He saith that he will no more forget us than a woman doth her sucking child;' and that we are written before him, and graven in the palms of his hands,' Isa. xlix. 15, &c., as men tie a string about their finger for a remembrance, or record in a book such things as they would regard. All these are expressions to describe the particular and express care of God's providence over his children. Now what shall be rendered to the Lord for all this? If we could do and suffer never so much for God, it will not answer the mercy of one day. Certainly at least God expecteth love for love. Love him as he is the strength of thy life and length of thy days,' Deut. xxx. 20. Every day's experience is new fuel to keep in the fire. The very beasts will respect their preservers; they are

loving to those that are kind to them: The ass knoweth his owner, and the ox his master's crib.' There is a kind of gratitude in the beasts by which they acknowledge their benefactors that feed them and cherish them; but we do not acknowledge God who feedeth us and upholdeth us every moment. There is no creature made worse by kindness but man. He, that was made to be master of the creatures, may become their scholar; there is many a good lesson to be learned in their school.

3. Redemption. As a man, when he weigheth a thing, casteth in weight after weight till the scales be counterpoised, so doth God mercy after mercy to poise down man's heart. Here is a mercy that is overweight in itself: 1 John iv. 10, Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that God loved us, and sent his Son to be a propitiation for our sins.' If we had had the wisdom to pitch upon such a remedy, as certainly it could not have entered into hearts of men or angels, Eph. iii. 10, yet we could not have the heart to ask it. It would have seemed a rude blasphemy in our prayers to desire that the Son of God should come out from his Father's bosom and die for us. Therefore, herein is love;' that is, this is the highest expression of God's love to the creature, not only that ever was, but can be; for in love only God acteth to the uttermost: he never showed so much of his power and wisdom, but he can show more; of his wrath, but he can show more; but he hath no greater thing to give than himself, than his Christ. At what a dear rate hath the Lord bought our hearts I He needed not; he might have made nobler creatures than the present race of men, and dealt with us as he did with the sinning angels; he would not enter into treaty with them, but the execution was as quick as the sin; so the Lord might utterly have cast us off, and made a new race of men to glorify his grace, leaving Adam to propagate the world to glorify his justice; or, at least, he might have redeemed us in another way, for I suppose it is a free

dispensation, opus liberi consilii. But, John iii. 16, God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son.' He took this way, that we might love Christ as well as believe in him. God might have redeemed us so much in another way, but he could not oblige us so much in another way; he would not only satisfy his justice, but show his love. It was the Lord's design, by his love, to deserve ours, and so for ever to shame the creature, if they should not now love him. Oh! think much of this glorious instance, the love of God in giving Christ, and the love of Christ in giving himself. When the sea wrought and was tempestuous,' and Jonah saw the storm, he said, Cast me into the sea, and it shall be calm to you;' but the storm was raised for his own sake. Now Christ, when he saw the misery of mankind, he said, Let it come on me. We raised the storm, but Christ would be cast in to allay it. If a prince, passing by an execution, should take the malefactor's chains, and suffer in his stead, this would be a wonderful instance indeed. Why! Christ hath borne our sorrows and carried our griefs,' Isa. liii. 4; the very same griefs that we should have suffered, so far as his holy person was capable of them. His desertion was equivalent to our loss, his agonies to our curse and punishment of sense; and all this very willingly for the sake of sinners. It is notable, he doth with like indignation rebuke Peter dissuading him from sufferings, as he doth the devil tempting him to idolatry: Get thee behind me, Satan;' compare Mat. xvi. 22, with Mat. iv. 10. He is well pleased with all his sorrow and sufferings, so he may gain the church, and espouse her to himself in a firm league and covenant: Isa. liii. 11, He shall see the travail of his soul, and be satisfied;' as if he said, Welcome agonies, welcome death, welcome curse, so poor souls be saved! As Jacob counted the days of his labour nothing, so he might obtain Rachel; and yet there is a vast difference between the love of Christ and the love of Jacob.

Rachel was lovely, but we are vile and unworthy creatures; and Christ's love is infinite, even beyond his sufferings and the outward expressions of it; as the windows of the temple were more large and open within than without. Well, then, every one of Christ's wounds is a mouth open to plead for love. He made himself so vile, that he might be more dear and precious to us. Certainly, if love brought Christ out of heaven to the cross, to the grave, should it not carry us to heaven, to God, to Christ, who hath been thus gracious to us? Thus God hath deserved our love.

Thirdly, The third and next argument is, God hath desired it. What doth the Lord see in our hearts that he should desire them? If a prince should not only make love to a vile and abject creature, but seek all means to gain her affection, you would count her very froward and unthankful to give him the denial. Christ doth not only oblige us, but woo us. If man were such as he should be, he would not need enforcements, because of the multitude of his obligations; and if the Lord did deal with us as we deserve, he would slight us and scorn us, rather than woo us. He doth not want lovers; there are angels enough in heaven, whose wills and affections cleave to him perfectly; yea, God doth not need the love of any creature; all this wooing is for our sakes. Wherein can frail men be beneficial to God? What increase of happiness hath he if all men should love him? It is his happiness to love himself, and he would have us to share in this happiness; therefore he threateneth, and promiseth, and beseecheth. As one that would gladly open a door, trieth key after key, till he hath tried every key in the bunch; so doth God try one method after another to work upon man's heart.

1. He threateneth eternal torments if we do not love him: 1 Cor. xvi. 22, If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema

maranatha.' The form of speech implieth the most dreadful curse that may be. It is not arbitrary whether you will love him or no; you are either to love him, or to perish eternally. Among men, if love doth not come kindly, we neglect it; that which is forced is nothing worth: yet the Lord is so earnest after the love of the creature, that he would have it by any means.

2. He promiseth. We have not only mercies in hand, but mercies in hope; not only obligations, but promises. It is our duty to love God if there were no heaven; our obligations might suffice; yet what great things hath God provided for them that love him!' 1 Cor. ii. 9. If a man should sell his love, he cannot have a better chapman than God, who is most rich and most liberal. If an earthly potentate should promise to them that love him half his kingdom, he would find lovers enough. God hath promised glory, the kingdom of heaven, and shall we not take him at his word? The Lord will give a gift for a gift; because he hath given us to love him, therefore he will give us heaven as the reward of love. Who ever heard that a hungry man was hired to eat, and rewarded for tasting dainty food? or a thirsty man for drinking? The love of God is so excellent a privilege, that we should endure all torments to obtain it; and yet God hath promised a reward: yea, he is pleased to bargain with us as if he were our equal, and we were altogether free before the contract.

3. Again, he beseecheth. We are cold and backward, therefore he useth entreaty upon entreaty, as if he were impatient of a denial. Out of what rock was man hewn? God himself cometh a-wooing, and we have the face to give him a repulse; and what doth he woo for but our hearts, which are his already by every kind of right and title? Prov. xxiii. 26, My son, give me thy heart.' God is pleased to call that a gift which is indeed a debt. Though the heart be due, yet God will put this

honour upon the creatures, to receive it from them in the way of a gift. It is but equity to give to God the things that are God's.' Look upon the heart; see if any could make it but God himself. Whose image and superscription doth it bear?' Wilt thou refuse to surrender up to God his right? God hath made it, bought it, and yet he beggeth it. When thou hast been as earnest with God, and asked anything regularly of him, did he deny thee? It is no benefit to him; he desireth the heart of the creature, not that he may be happy, but that he may be liberal; he would have thy heart that he may make it better. How easily do we give up our affections to anything but God, who hath the best title to them! If the world or Satan knocketh, we open presently. We are as wax to Satan, and as stone to God; exorable and easy to be entreated by any carnal motion. As some hard stones cannot be wrought upon but by their own dust, so men are facile only to their own corruptions, to their own lusts, not to the motions of God's Spirit.

Fourthly, The nature of love showeth that it is fit for nothing but God. He hath given us this faculty and disposition, that we may close with himself. He that looketh upon an axe will say it was made to cut; and he that looketh on love will say it was made for God. What is the genius and disposition of love? Love is nothing but an earnest bent and strong motion of the soul to what is good for us. [53] Every man hath an inclination in his nature to what he conceiveth to be good, Ps. iv. 6, and grace doth only direct and set it right. All the difference between nature and grace is in fixing the chiefest good and the utmost end. One great blessing of the covenant is a new heart;' that is, a new and right placing of our affections. Well, then, God is summum bonum, the chiefest good; even nature cannot be satisfied without him, but grace findeth all contentment in him. If there be any good in the creatures, it is originally in him; he is the fountain of living

waters, where comforts are sweetest and freest. The heart hunteth after good among the creatures, which is but an image and ray of that perfection which is in God; and who would leave the substance to follow the shadow, and prize the picture to the disdain of the person whom it represents? It were easy to prove that God is the only proper, eternal, all-sufficient good of the soul; and if the heart were not perverted and biassed with carnal desires to other objects, it would directly move to God, as all things do to their centre. I say, were it not for sin, we should no more need be pressed to love God, than to love ourselves. There need no great motives to press us to love ourselves, nature is prone enough of its own accord; and if nature had remained in that purity wherein it was created, it would move to God of its own accord; as all things move to their centre, and there they rest. Now God is the centre of the soul. The soul's good is not honours, pleasures, profits; the soul is a spirit, and must have a spiritual good; it is immortal, and it must have an eternal good. By experience we find that our affections are never in their due posture, but are like members out of joint (or the arms when they hang backward) when they are not fixed upon God; therefore there is a restlessness and dissatisfaction in the soul. [54] We grope and feel about for happiness, and cannot find it, Acts xvii. 26, 27; like Noah's dove, we hover up and down, and find no place whereon the sole of our foot should rest. Well, then, if God be the only all-sufficient good of the soul, why do not we love him more? If he be the centre of the soul, why do not we move directly thither? It is a shame that a stone should be carried with greater force to its centre than we to God. By its natural course it falleth downward, and breaketh all things in the way, yea, though itself be broken in pieces. But alas! how little do we break through impediments to go to God! It were a miracle to see a stone

stopped in the air by a feather. But now every vain thing keepeth us off, and intercepts our affections; sin hath given us another centre, and after grace received, we hang too much that way. Again, as love is for good, so it is for one object; like a pyramid, it ends in a point; affection is weakened by dispersion, as a river by being turned into many channels. In conjugal love, where friendship is to the height, there is but one that can share in it; that is the law of nature: Mal. ii. 15, Did he not make one? yet he had the residue of spirit;' the meaning is, that God made but one man for one woman, though he had spirit enough to make more; it was not out of defect of power, but wise choice, that their affections to one another might be the stronger, which otherwise would be weakened; as they are in the brutes scattered promiscuously to several objects. So the true object of love is one God; he is loved for himself, and other things for his sake. Once more, the force and vehemency of love showeth that it was made for God; love is the vigorous bent of the soul, and full of heights and excesses, which, if diverted to other objects, would make us guilty of idolatry; we should place them in the room of God. Still we find that men are besotted with what they love; as Samson was led about like a child by Delilah: all conveniences of life, pleasures, profits, are contemned for the enjoyment of the thing beloved. Now, these are heights proper to the divinity, to the infinite majesty of God. To whom else is this vehemency and this self-denial due? If we lavish it upon the creatures, we make gods of them; and therefore covetousness is called idolatry, Eph. v. 5, and the sensualist is said to make his belly his god, Phil. iii. 19. There is such an excess, such a doating in love, that if we be not careful in fixing it, before we are aware we run into practical idolatry and practical atheism. There is an atheism in the heart as well as in the judgment. Atheism in the judgment is when we are not

convinced of the being of God; in the heart, when our affections are not set on God: this is more incurable, because the dogmatical atheist may be convinced by reason, but the practical atheist can only be reformed by grace. Thus the nature of love showeth it.

Fifthly, The nature of the saint showeth it; the new nature hath new affections; it bewrayeth itself by the new heart, as well as by the renewed mind, Rom. xii. 2. There are not only new thoughts, but new desires and new delights; desires after God, and a delight in God, as the fountain of holiness. When we come to God at first, we love him out of spiritual interest, for ease and comfort, and the benefit we gain by. him; Christ alloweth it: Come to me and I will give you ease,' Mat. xi. 28. When fire is first kindled, there is as much smoke as flame; but afterwards it burneth brighter and brighter by degrees. A fountain, as soon as digged, runneth muddy at first, but afterwards the stream groweth more pure and clear. So doth the love of the saints; at first it is but a love of interest, but by acquaintance we love him out of a principle of the new nature, for his holiness and excellency, because that which is in us in part is in God by way of eminency and perfection. Certainly likeness must needs beget love, and the saints, being conformed to God, delight in him; so that then their love floweth not so much from profit and interest as grace; yea, at length out of a vehement complacency of the new nature, they love holiness above happiness or spiritual interest; and hell is not so bad as sin in their account. [55] There cannot be a worse hell to them than unkindness to God or grieving his Spirit; and heaven is amiable for God's sake, because he is loved there and enjoyed there; there are none of God's enemies in heaven, and there they shall serve him and cleave to him without weariness and wandering. Well, then, there is such a disposition in the saints to love God, Ps. xxxi. 23, which ariseth not

only from hope, because of the great benefit which we expect from him, nor only from gratitude, or the sense of his love already showed, but from an inclination of the new nature, and that sympathy and likeness that is between us, [56] because we hate what he hateth, and love what he loveth, Prov. viii. 13; Rev. ii. 6, and because God is the original fountain and sampler of holiness.

Use. Well, then, saints mind your work. Do you indeed love God? Christ puts Peter to the question thrice, John xxi. A deceitful heart is apt to abuse you. Ask again and again, Do I indeed love God? Evidences are these:--

1. If you love God, he will be loved alone; those that do riot give all to God, give nothing; he will have the whole heart. If there were another God, we might have some excuse for our reservations; but since there is but one God, he must have all, for he doth not love in mates. When the harbingers take up a house for a prince, they turn out all; none must remain there, that there may be room for his greatness. So all must avoid, that God may have the sole possession of our hearts. The devil, that hath no right to anything, would have a part, for by that means he knoweth the whole will fall to him; conscience will not let him have all, and therefore he would have a part to keep possession: as Pharaoh stood bucking with Moses and Aaron; if not the Israelites, then their little ones; if not their little ones, then their herds; if not their herds, then their flocks: but Moses telleth him there was not a hoof to be left. So Satan, if he cannot have the outward man, yet he would have the heart; if there be not room enough in the heart for every lust, then he craveth indulgence in some things that are less odious and distasteful; if conscience will not allow drunkenness, yet a little worldliness is pleaded for as no great matter. But the love of God cannot be in that heart where the world

reigneth. Dagon and the ark could not abide in the same temple; neither can the heart be divided between God and mammon. All men must have some religion to mask their pleasures and carnal practices, that they may be favourable to their lusts and interests with less remorse; and usually they order the matter so, that Christ shall have their consciences, and the world their hearts and affections. But, alas! they do not consider that God is jealous of a rival; when he cometh into the heart, he will have the room empty. It is true, we may love other things in subordination to God, but not in competition with God; that is, when we love God and other things for God's sake, in God and for God. When a commander hath taken a strong castle, and placed a garrison in it, he suffereth none to enter but those of his own side, keeping the gate shut to his enemies. So we must open the heart to none but God, and those that are of God's party and side, keeping the gate shut to others. We may love the creatures as they are of God's side, as they draw our hearts more to God, or engage us to be more cheerful in service, or give us greater advantages of doing good. Of what party are they? Bring nothing into thy heart, and allow nothing there, that is contrary to God. When Sarah saw Ishmael scoffing at Isaac, she thrust him out of doors. So when riches, and honour, and the love of the world upbraid you with your love to God, as if you were a fool to stand so nicely upon terms of conscience, &c., when they encroach and allow Christ no room but in the conscience, it is time to thrust them out of doors, that the Lord alone may have the preeminence in our souls.

2. This love must be demonstrated by solid effects, such as are:--

[1.] A hatred of sin: Ps. xcvii. 10, Ye that love the Lord, hate evil.' With love to the chief est good, there will be a hatred of the chiefest evil. Friends have common loves, as I said, and common aversations. Upon every carnal motion doth thy heart recoil upon thee, and say, How

can I do this wickedness, and sin against God?' Gen. xxxix. 9; or else, Is this thy kindness to thy friend?' or after such a deliverance as this,' &c., Ezra ix. 13. Love to God will be interposing and crossing every carnal motion.

[2.] By a delight in obedience: 1 John v. 3, This is love, that we keep his commandments, and his commandments are not grievous.' Nothing is difficult and tedious to him that hath any affection to his work. As the prophet cured the bitterness of the wild gourds by casting in meal, so mingle but a little love with your work, and the bitterness is gone. Shechem yielded to be circumcised for Dinah's sake, because he loved her; and Jacob endured his seven years' service for Rachel's sake: so will love make us obey God cheerfully in things contrary to our natural inclination. Love and labour are often coupled in scripture, 1 Thes. i. 3; Heb. vi. 10; and those that left their first works had lost their first love, Rev. ii. 4, 5.

[3.] Delight in God's presence, and grief for his absence; or a holy sensibleness both of his accesses and recesses, to and from the soul. Can a man love God, and be content without him? If you lose but a ring which you affect, how are you troubled till it be found again! Ye have taken away my gods (saith he), and do you ask, What aileth thee?' Judges xviii. 24. So when God is withdrawn, all visits of love and influences of grace are suspended, and they have no communion with him in their duties, should they not mourn? See Mat. ix. 15. Is spiritual love without all kind of passion? or are they Christians that are stupid and insensate, and never take notice of God's coming and going? These are the evidences. I shall only now suggest two helps to keep up and increase this love to God, and I have done with this argument.

1. Prize nothing that cometh from God unless thou canst see his love in it. God giveth many gifts to wicked men, but he doth not give them his

love. The possession of all things will do us no good unless we have God himself; other mercies may be salted with a curse. God's children are not satisfied till they can see him and enjoy him in every comfort and mercy. Esau was reconciled to Jacob, and therefore Jacob saith, Gen. xxxiii. 10, I have seen thy face as the face of God.' It was a token and pledge of the gracious face of God smiling on him. Hezekiah was delivered out of a sickness, and then he doth not say, Thou hast delivered me from the grave; but, Thou hast loved me from the grave,' Isa. xxxviii. 17.

2. Prize nothing that thou return to God unless there be love in it. We accept a small gift where the party loveth, and otherwise the greatest is refused: If I give my body to be burned, and have not love,' &c., 1 Cor. xiii. 3. Love is an act of grace by itself; other duties are not acts of grace unless they come from love; as alms, fasting, prayer, martyrdom, &c., they are all nothing; ou'den eimi (saith the apostle), I am' not only little, but nothing.' On the other side, small things are made great by love; as a cup of cold water, a poor woman's mite, they are accepted as coming from love.

So much for the matter of the prayer. We come now to the manner or degree of enjoyment, be multiplied; from whence note:--

Doct. That we should not [57] seek grace at the hands of God, but the increase and multiplication of it. In managing this point, I shall first give you reasons to press you to look after growth in grace; secondly, I shall give you some observations concerning it; and so, thirdly, come to some application.

First, the reasons are these:--

1. Where there is life there will be growth; and, if grace be true, it will surely increase. A painted flower keepeth always at the same pitch and stature; the artist may bestow beauty upon it, but he cannot bestow

life. A painted child will be as little ten years hence as it is now.
So a pretence of religion always keepeth at the same stay; yea, when their first heats are spent, they are fearfully blasted. But now they that have true grace are compared to a living plant, which increaseth in bulk and stature, Ps. xcii. 12, 13, and to a living child, which groweth by receiving kindly nourishment, 1 Peter ii. 2. Therefore it is not enough to get peace and love, but we must get them multiplied.
2. If we do not grow, we go backward, Heb. vi.; compare the first with the fourth verse, Let us go on to perfection;' and then presently he treateth of apostasy. We cannot keep that which we have received, if we do not labour to increase it. They that row against the stream had need ply the oar, lest the force of the waters carry them back ward; or as he that goeth up a sandy hill sinketh down if he do not go forward, Mat. xxv. He that would not improve his talent lost it. So here we waste and consume what we have, if we do not improve it. It is dangerous to rest satisfied and never go further; there is no stay in religion: all the angels on Jacob's ladder were either ascending or descending, continually in motion. There are no stunted trees in Christ's garden; if they leave off to grow, they prove doated or rotten trees. An active nature, such as man's is, must either grow worse or better; therefore we should be as careful after the increase of grace as we would be cautious of the loss of grace.
3. It is an ill sign to be contented with a little grace. He was never good that doth not desire to grow better. [58] Spiritual things do not cloy in the enjoyment. He that hath once tasted the sweetness of grace hath arguments enough to make him seek further, and desire more grace; every degree of holiness is as desirable as the first; therefore there can be no true holiness without a desire of perfect holiness. God giveth us a taste to this end and purpose, that we may long for a

fuller draught; as the clusters of Canaan brought to Israel in the wilderness made them put on for the country. They are hypocrites, and sure to be apostates, that are contented with a taste, Heb. vi.

4. Because we cannot have too much grace: there is no nimium in the internals of religion; you cannot have too much knowledge, too much love of God, too much of the fear of God. In the outward part there may be too much done, and then it proveth will-worship and superstition. The apostle saith, 2 Peter i. 11, That we must give diligence, that an abundant entrance may be ministered to us into the everlasting kingdom of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.' Some are afar off from the kingdom of God, Eph. ii. 13, as persons ignorant and touched with no care of religion: some come near, but never enter, Mark xii. 34; Acts xxvi. 28, as semi-converts and men of a blameless life; these cheapen, but do not buy, and go through with the bargain: others enter, but with greater difficulty, are scarcely saved,' 1 Peter iv. 18, Saved as by fire,' 1 Cor. iii. 15. They make a hard shift to go to heaven, and have only grace enough to keep body and soul together (as we say) not a jot to spare: others enter with full sails, or as it is said, they have an abundant entrance ministered to them,' and yet all is but little enough; spiritual things cannot exceed measure. But you will say, It is said, Eccles. vii. 16, Be not righteous over-much.' I answer--Either it is meant of an opinionative righteousness, be not too righteous in thine own conceit; or rather, of an indiscreet heat, or a rigid and sullen severity, without any temper of wisdom and moderation; otherwise in real holiness there can never be enough.

5. God hath provided for them that grow in grace a more ample reward; according to our measures of grace, so will our measures of glory be; for they that have most grace are vessels of a larger capacity; others are filled according to their size. It is indeed a question whether

there be degrees of glory, yea or no; [59] but I suppose it may easily be determined: He that soweth sparingly shall reap sparingly,' whereas others have their bosoms full of sheaves. If a man with a little grace should get to heaven, yet he hindereth his own preferment. Who would have a thin crop, and a lean harvest?

6. It suiteth with our present state. Here we are in a state of progress and growth, not of rest and perfection: grace is not given out at once, but by degrees. Christ saith, John xvii. 26, I have declared thy name, and will declare it: and John i. 50, Believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these;' there is more to come, therefore let us not rest in our first experiences. Paul saith, I have not attained,' Phil. iii. When grace is wrought, yet there is something lacking. He is a foolish builder that would rest in the middle of his work; and because the foundation is laid, is careless of the superstructure. The state of the saints is expressed by a growing light,' Prov. iv. 18. As long as there is want, there should be growth; see 1 Thes. iv. 1.

7. Seeking the increase and multiplication of spiritual gifts suiteth best with the bounty and munificence of God. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit have rich grace for us; and we are most welcome when we seek for most plenty. God the Father is represented as rich in mercy,' Eph. ii. 4; Rom. x. 12. We can never exhaust the treasures of grace, and impoverish the exchequer of heaven. So Christ hath a rich and full merit, 2 Cor. viii. 9, to make us rich, &c. God the Son aimed at it in all his sufferings and condescensions, that he might make a large purchase for us, and we might not be straitened in grace. The Spirit of God is poured out plousi'os, richly,' Titus iii. 6. There is mercy enough in God the Father, merit enough in God the Son, efficacy enough in God the Spirit: God is not wanting, if we be not wanting to

ourselves. If a mighty king should open his treasure, and bid men come and bring their bags, and take as much as they would; do you think they would neglect this occasion of gain? Surely no; they would run and fetch bag after bag, and never cease. Thus doth the Lord do in the covenant of grace; you will rather want vessels than treasure.

8. It is a necessary piece of gratitude: we would have mercy to be multiplied, and therefore we should take care that peace and love be multiplied also; we would have God add to our blessings, and therefore we should add to our graces; see 2 Peter i. 5. When we have food we would have clothing; and when we have clothing we would have house and harbour; and when we have all these things, we would have them in greater proportion; the like care should we show in gracious enjoyments. When we have knowledge, we should add temperance, and when we have temperance, we should add patience, &c.

9. We may learn of our Lord Jesus, to whom we must be conformed in all things: Luke ii. 52, He grew in wisdom and stature:' the meaning is, his human capacity was enlarged by degrees according to his progress in age and strength, for in all things he was like us except sin, and our reason is ripened and perfected together with our age.

10. We may learn of worldly men, who join house to house, and field to field,' Isa. v. 8, and are never satisfied. So there is a holy covetousness in spiritual things, when we join faith to faith, Rom. i. 17, and obedience to obedience, one degree to another: our blessings are better, and the chiefest good should not be followed with a slacker hand; it is our happiness to enjoy the infinite God, and therefore we should not set a stint and limit to our desires. With what arts and methods of increase doth a covetous man seek to advance himself? He liveth more by hope than by memory; and what he hath seemeth nothing to what he expecteth. So should we forget the things that are behind, and

reach forth to the things that are before us,' Phil. iii. 14. A covetous man seemeth the poorer the more he hath gotten: go should we grow humble with every enjoyment; it is a good degree of grace to see how much we want grace. A covetous man maketh it the main work and business of his life to increase his estate: He goeth to bed late, riseth early, eateth the bread of sorrows,' and all for a little pelf.

The strength of lust should shame us. Should not we make religion the business of our lives, and our great employment? Shall we be as insatiable as the grave to the world, when a little grave serveth the turn?

Obs. 2. The next thing which I am to do is to give you some observations concerning growth in grace: they are these:--

1. To discern growth there is required some time. A total change, which is far more sensible than growth, that may be in an instant; then a sinner, now a saint; but there must be a competent time to judge of our growth; we cannot discern it by single acts, so much as by the greater portions of our lives. We cannot so easily find out how we grow by every sermon as by comparing our past estate with our present: we do not fly to the top of Jacob's ladder, but go up step by step; [60] it is a work of time; and so we may judge of our not growing, if after a long time we are where we were, under the power of the game prejudices, or the same doubts, or the same lusts still; see Heb. v. 12.

2. In the growing of saints there is much difference; all the plants in Christ's garden are not of a like height and stature; some that are more publicly useful have their five talents, others but two; some thrive more, and grow of a sudden: 2 Thes. i. 3, Your faith grew exceedingly;' others are weak and slow, and yet they are fruitful: we all grow according to the measure of a part, Eph. iv.; that is, according to the rate of that part which we sustain in the body. A

finger groweth not to the quantity of an arm; they all grow, but the growth of all is not equal.

3. Growth in grace is always accompanied with growth in knowledge: 2 Peter iii. 18, But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,' &c. Plants that grow out of the sun send up a longer stalk, but the fruit is worse. Some Christians pitch all their care upon the growth of love, and take no pains to grow in knowledge; but this is not right; we should always follow on to know the Lord,' Hosea vi. 3. We read that Christ grew in knowledge;' we do not read that he grew in grace. God's choicest saints are always bettering their notions of God. Moses, his first request was, Tell me thy name,' Exod. iv., and afterwards, show me thy glory,' Exod. xxxiii. Our fairest portion in heaven is the satisfaction of the understanding with the knowledge of God: therefore if we would have grace multiplied, it must be through the knowledge of God,' 2 Peter i. 2; the more shine, the more warmth.

4. Growth of knowledge in the growing and increase is less sensible than the growth of grace, but afterward more sensible. As a plant increaseth in length and stature, though we do not see the progress, but afterwards we know that it hath grown, growth in grace is always cum lucta, with many assaults, and so more sensible, whereas the work upon the understanding is more still and silent; draw away the curtain, and the light cometh in without any more stir; our ignorance vanisheth silently, and without such strife as goeth to the taming of carnal affections: but afterwards it is more sensible, for we have not always a spiritual feeling, but the effects of knowledge are standing and permanent: Eph. v. 8, Ye were darkness, but now are light in the Lord.'

5. Progress in knowledge is rather in degrees than in parts and matters known: I mean, it consisteth not so much in knowing new truths, as in a

greater proportion of light; yet I say it is rather, not altogether, for a man may walk in present practices which future light may disprove and retract; but usually the increase of a Christian is rather in the measure of knowledge than in knowing new things; the light shineth more and more,' Prov. iv. I know God more, Christ more, the vanity of the world more, the odiousness of sin more, that is, more practically and in another manner than I did before; old principles are improved and perfected. I speak this because of the danger to which men expose themselves by expecting new light, keeping the soul from an establishment in present principles, and looking for new truths to be revealed to them.

6. Of all graces we need most to grow in faith: 1 Thes. iii. 10, I desire to see you, that I may perfect that which is lacking in your faith;' Luke xvii. 5, Lord, increase our faith;' and Mark ix. 24, Lord, I believe; help my unbelief.' Faith is most defective; our assent is tremulous; our affiance weak, and faith is most assaulted. All the temptations of Satan tend to weaken your faith, and all other graces depend upon the increase of faith.

7. Growth in parts and gifts must needfully be distinguished from growth in grace. Many may grow in parts that go back in grace; you can only discern a mere growth in parts and gifts by pride and self ends: Knowledge puffeth up,' 1 Cor. viii. 1. When men grow in abilities, and grow more proud and carnal, it is a sad symptom.

8. The infallible signs of growth in grace are three--when we grow more spiritual, more solid, more humble.

[1.] More spiritual. The growth of wicked men in spiritual wickedness is less debauched, but more malicious; so will our growth in grace be discerned by our spirituality in our aims, when our ends are more elevated to God's glory, &c. In our grounds and principles; as when we

resist sin out of love to God, and as it is contrary to our purity and holiness, and when we are carried out against inward corruptions: such as the world doth not take notice of; not only against sins, but lusts and thoughts, for that argueth more light and more love. So when we regard the spirituality of duties, serving the Lord in the spirit.' So when we relish the more spiritual part of the word, plain and solid preaching, rather than such as is garish and full of the pomp of words: 1 Cor. ii. 6, We speak wisdom among those that are perfect;; the trappings of an ordinance are baits to take the more carnal sort of hearers. Plutarch, in his treatise of growth in moral virtue, [61] wherein are many notable things applicable to growth in grace, saith that a man that hath made some progress in virtue is like a physician, that, coming into a garden, he doth not consider flowers for their beauty, as gallants do, but for their use and virtue in medicine. So he doth not consider speech for its fineness, but fitness and seasonableness to present use. The same holdeth good also in growth in grace; the more we grow, the more we regard the spiritual part of the word, and such as is of a practical use and concernment.

[2.] More solid and judicious: Phil. i. 9, I pray God your love may abound more and more in all judgment.' There is a childishness in religion as well as nature, 1 Cor. xiii. 11, when we are led altogether by fancy and affection; but afterward we grow more prudent, sober, and solid. Growth, then, is not to be measured by intenseness and vigour of affection that goeth and cometh, and in the infancy of grace our affections are most warm and pregnant. A young tree may have more leaves and blossoms, but an old tree is more deeply rooted, and young Christians seem altogether to be made up of will and affections, and fervorous motions, but have less of judgment and solidity, many times of sincerity. [62] As men in a deep thirst take down what is offered to

them to drink before they discern the taste of it, so acts of will outstart the understanding; but in old men, nature being spent, and through long acquaintance with religion there are not such quick and lively motions; the one are sick of love, have more qualms and agonies; the other are more rooted in love, and grow more firm, constant, solid, rational, and wise, in ordering the spiritual life.

[3.] More humble; as it is a good progress in learning to know our ignorance; they that have but a smattering are most conceited. Plutarch, in the fore-mentioned treatise, tells us of the saying of Menedemus, that those that went to study at Athens at first seemed to themselves to be wise, afterwards only lovers of wisdom, then orators such as could speak of wisdom, and last of all, knowing nothing, with the increase of learning still laying aside their pride and arrogancy. [63] So it is with those that grow in grace by acquaintance with God: light is increased and made more reflective, and they are more sensible of their obligations to God, and so are more tender, and by long experience are better acquainted with their own hearts; and that is the reason why we have such humble acknowledgments from them. Paul, a sanctified vessel, yet calleth himself chiefest of sinners,' 1 Tim, i. 15, and less than the least of the saints,' Eph. iii. 8. And Agur, Prov. xxx. 2, 3, Surely I am more brutish than any man; I have not the understanding of a man, I have neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the holy.' So if you did overhear the secret confessions of the saints to God, you would think them the vilest persons in the world, for so they are in their own sense and representations to God.

9. The lowest evidences of growth in grace are longing for food, and being humble for want of growth. For the first, longing for food, see 1 Peter ii. 2. Life hath a nutritive appetite joined with it, when that is strong it is a sign the soul is healthy, it will grow. As we say of

children that take the dug kindly, they will thrive and do well enough.

For the second, humble for want of growth, see Mark ix. 24, Help my unbelief.' It is a sign you mind the work, and are sensible of spiritual defects, which is a great advantage.

10. Growth is the special fruit of the divine grace. God giveth the increase, 1 Cor. iii. 6. Plants thrive better by the dew of heaven than when they are watered by hand. Grace, that is necessary to every action, is much more necessary to every degree. In the text, the apostle doth not exhort, but pray, mercy, peace, and love be multiplied.' Our endeavours are necessary, as ploughing and digging are necessary, but the blessing cometh from above. These are the observations; let us now apply all.

Use 1. Let us be earnest with God for this increase. He hath the riches of glory,' Eph. iii. 16, which we cannot exhaust. You honour God when you go for more; you want more, and he can give more; when men are contented with a little, it is a sign either of hardness of heart, they are not sensible of their wants; or of unbelief, as if God had no higher and better things to give us.

Use 2. First, It showeth us how far they are from being Christians that care not for the least degree of grace, that do not spend a thought that way; these are far from the kingdom of God.

Secondly, That are fallen back and have lost the savouriness of their spirits, and their delight in communion with God. Time was when they could not let a day pass without a duty, nor a duty pass without some sensible experience of God, but now can spend whole days and weeks and never give God a visit; time was when there could not a carnal motion arise, but they were up in arms against it, but now their hearts swarm with vain thoughts, and they can swallow gross sins without remorse; improvident mis-spence of time was once a great burden, but they have

lost their tenderness, and can spend a Sabbath unprofitably and find no regret; their vain thoughts were wont to trouble them, but now not their carnal practices; duty was once sweet, but now their greatest bondage. Certainly, the candle of the Lord doth not shine upon them as it did in the months that are past.'

Thirdly, Those that are at a stay had need look to themselves; stunted trees cumber the ground, and they that go on in a dead, power less course do hurt rather than good; lukewarm profession is but the picture of religion, and painted things do not grow, but keep at the same pitch. If a man were a Christian in good earnest, could he be contented with the present weakness of his faith, imperfection of his knowledge, with this creeping, cold way of obedience?

[35] Prostethe'setai, an additional supply, like paper and pack-tread, which is given over and above the bargain.

[36] Qu. to'?--ED.

[37] So in the angel's song, Luke ii. 19, Glory, peace, and good-will. All comes from good-will; that is the first cause, as God's glory is the last end. Under the law the first and the tenth were the Lord's; the beginning and ending are his.

[38] Id agit tota scriptura, ut credamus Deum esse misericordem.'--Luther.

[39] Misericordia suadet ut parcam, peccatorum clamor cogit ut puniam.'--Salv.

[40] Mutat sententiam sed non decretum.'--Bradwardine.

[41] Nisi expectaret impium, non inveniret quem glorificaret pium.' --Aug.

[42] As they said, We have heard that the kings of Israel are merciful kings,' 1 Kings xx. 31.

[43] Hoi me`n a'lloi ei ti` kai` e'choien lege'tosan, e'go de e` ouda,

e`n le'go,' &c.--Chrysost.

[44] Chemnitius observat aliter de justificatione sentire homines in disputationibus, quando cum hominibus sui similibus rixantur, aliter in meditatiouibus quando coram Deo sistuut conscientiam suam quasi causa dicenda esset,' &c.--Davenant. de Justitia.

[45] Etsi non sic vixi ut pudeat inter vos vivere, etc., sed quia bonum dominum habeo.'--Possidius in Vita August.

[46] So those in Matthew did not deny, but made excuse, amele'santes, Mat. xxii. 5. They would not take it into their care and thoughts.

[47] Qu. peace'?--ED.

[48] Qu. lust'?--ED.

[49] Eodem sanguine Christi glutinati.'--Aug. Confess. de Seipso et Alipio.

[50] Pax nostra bellum contra Satanam.'--Tertul. ad Martyras.

[51] Iniqua lex est quae se exquinari non patitur.'--Tertul. Apol.

[52] Dii multa dedere neglecti.'

[53] See Neirembergius De Ingenio Amoris.

[54] Domine, fecisti nos propter te; et irrequietum est cor nostrum donec perveniat ad te.'--Aug.

[55] Si hic peccati pudorem, illic iuferni horrorem,' &c.--Anselm.

[56] Eadem velle et nolle, ea demum vera est amicitia.'--Sallust.

[57] Qu. not only'?--ED.

[58] Minime bonus est qui melior fieri nos vult.'--Bernardus.

[59] See Spanheim. Dub. Evang., parto 31, Dub. 135, et alius passim.

[60] Ascendendo, non volando, ascenditur summitas scalae.'--Bernard.

[61] See Plutarch in his treatise peri` tes prokopes ep arete.

[62] Young men, if they know their hearts, have cause to complain of hypocrisy, as old men of deadness.'--Mr Thomas Goodwing in a Treatise of Growth in Grace.

[63] Kataplein ga`r e'phe tou`s pollou`s epi` schole`n Athe'naze so'phous to` proton, eita ge'nesthai philoso'phous, eita re'toras, tou de` chro'nou proi'ontos idio'tas, o'so mallon a'ptontai tou lo'gou, mallon to` oi'ema kai` to`n tu'phon katatitheme'nous.'--Plutarchus ubi supra.

Ver. 3. Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write to you of the

common salvation, it was needful for me to write to you, and exhort you, that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints.

The apostle, having dispatched the salutation, maketh way for the matter of the epistle. This verse is the preface to the whole, wherein he proposeth two things:--

1. The occasion of his writing.

2. The matter and drift of it.

1. The occasion of writing this epistle, which was double.

[1.] His earnestness in promoting their good, beloved, when I gave diligence to write to you, of the common salvation.

[2.] The urgency of the present necessity, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you.

In assigning his earnestness and zeal for their good, you may take notice of three things, which I shall explain in their order.

(1st.) A compellation of their persons, aga'petoi, beloved, a term usual in the apostles' writings: the same word is used 1 Peter ii. 11, and there translated dearly beloved.' It noteth not only that affection which by the law of nature we owe to one another, Rom. xiii. 8, nor that love which by the law of bounty and kindness we are bound to render to them that love us, Mat. v. 46, but that singular love which we owe to them that are one with us in Christ, which is always expressed by aga'pe in scripture, and we sometimes translate it charity, often love; the Rhemists always charity, whose tenderness in this point (as one observeth) is not altogether to be disallowed, lest it be confounded with common and impure love, expressed by e'ros; and

charity, being a church word, is wholly free from such indifferency and equivocation: so here, instead of beloved, they render my dearest, which fitly noteth the tenderness and bowels that are in Christian affection.

Doct. From this compilation observe, that Christians should be to each other as beloved; such dearness and entireness of affection should pass between them, that they may entitle one another to their bowels and choicer respects.

The reasons are these:--

1. None can have better grounds to love another. They are members of the same body, 1 Cor. xii. Brothers born of the same womb, living in the same family, have defaced all the feelings of nature, and been divided in interest and affection. But surely no such schism can happen in the same body. Who would use an arm to cut off a leg, or a hand to scratch out the eyes? Members care for one another.' Now this is the relation which Christ hath left us; he hath not only called us into a family, but into a body, Col. iii. 15. See the same pressed, together with many other uniting considerations, Eph. iv. 4-6, There is one body, one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all,' Let us a little go over that place. The first engagement is one body; they are wens and monstrous excrescences, not members, that suck all the nourishment to themselves. Again, one member lacking, or out of joint, is a pain and deformity to the whole. The next engagement is one Spirit, which in all other relations can only be had in fancy and imagination. Friends speak as if they lived by one common soul, but here it is so really; all believers have the same Spirit. I say in other relations, even in the nearest, every one is acted by his own soul; but here by one Spirit we

are baptized into one body,' 1 Cor. xii. 13. What should divide us when we have the same Spirit? We have not all the same measures, and that occasioneth some difference; as the soul showeth itself in some members more than in others, though it acteth all; but the Spirit is the same. The next consideration is one hope. Shall not the same earth contain those that expect to live in the same heaven? Luther and Zuinglius, Cranmer and Hooper, Ridley and Saunders, shall all accord for ever in heaven; and certainly it is through the relics of the flesh that they cannot accord here. In other relations there may be divisions, because they have different hopes, and it may be hopes that entrench and encroach upon the good of each other; but here you have one heaven and one hope; it is all for you: there may be a difference in the degree of glory, but none to provoke pride or feed envy. How will bitter and keen spirits look upon each other when they meet in glory? It followeth one Lord. We are in the same family, how will you look God in the face if you fall a-smiting your fellow-servants?' Mat. xxiv. 45. Then one faith. There may be different apprehensions, and every one may abound in his own sense in circumstances, but the faith is the same, they agree in the same essentials and substantiate of religion. The enemies of the church, though divided in interests and opinions, yet, because they agree in one common hatred of the saints, can hold together. Gebal, and Ammon, and Amalek, and the men of Tyre, did all conspire against Israel, Ps. lxxxiii.; like Samson's foxes, though their faces looked several ways, yet were tied to one another by their tails, and ran together to burn up the corn-fields; and shall not the people of God agree, who all profess one and the same faith? The next consideration is one baptism; that is, one badge of profession: it was a cause of difference among Jacob's sons that one had a coat of divers colours,' a special badge of affection. Consider you are all brought in

by the baptism of water and the use of ordinary means; none have a special and privilegiate call from heaven above the rest of their brethren. Lastly, it followeth, one God and Father of all. You all worship the same God; there is nothing divides more than different objects of worship. When one scorneth what another adoreth it is extremely provoking; [64] it was the plea used to Joseph, Gen. l. 17, Pardon the trespass of the servants of thy father's God.' Thus you see that we have better grounds of love than others have.

2. None can have higher motives than the love of Christ: Eph. v. 2, Walk in love, as Christ hath also loved us.' The pagan world was never acquainted with such a motive. Now none are affected and melted with the love of Christ but those that have an interest in it. Therefore Christ expecteth more love from Christians than from others: Mat. v. 46, If ye love them that love you, what reward shall ye have? do not even the publicans the same?.' The publicans were accounted the most vile and unworthy men in that age; but a publican would love those of his own party; therefore a Christian that is acquainted with Christ's love to strangers, to enemies, should manage his affections with more excellency and pureness. The world is not acquainted with the love of Christ, and therefore only loveth its own,' but we are acquainted with it, and therefore should love others. See John xiii. 34, See that ye love one another, as I have loved you.' Jesus Christ came from heaven, not only to repair and preserve the notions of the Godhead by the greatness of his sufferings, but to propound to us a more exact pattern of charity, and to elevate duty between man and man.

3. None have a greater charge. Christ calleth it his new commandment:' John xiii. 34, A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another.' How new, since it was as old as the moral law, or law of nature? I answer--It is called new because excellent, as a new song,

&c., or rather because solemnly and specially renewed by him, and commended to their care, as new things and new laws are much esteemed and prized; or enforced by a new reason and example of his own death. So 1 John iii. 23, aute e'stin e entole`, This is the commandment, that we should believe in him whom he hath sent, and love one another as he gave commandment.' It is made equal with faith. All the scriptures aim at faith and love;' it was Christ's dying charge, the great charge which he left at his death: John xv. 17, These things I command you, that ye love one another.' Speeches of dying men are received with most veneration and reverence, especially the charge of dying friends. The brethren of Joseph, fearing lest he should remember the injuries formerly done to him, they use this plea, Thy father did command us before he died, saying,' &c., Gen. 1. 16. Let us fulfil the will of the dead. When Christ took leave of his disciples, he left this as his last charge. Think of it when thou art bent to quarrel or to neglect others. Shall I slight his last commandment, his dying charge? It is made the character of Christ's disciples: Hereby shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another.' It is as much as your discipleship,' &c.

Use 1. It serveth to press you to this amity and love. Why should those that are to meet in the same heaven be of such an estranged heart to each other? Certainly it cometh from evil. In two cases God's people can agree well enough--in glory and in misery; in a prison, as Ridley and Hooper did; and in heaven, as all do; in heaven, where there is no sin, and in a prison, where lusts lie low, and are under restraint. Oh! then labour for love and meekness. To which end take a few directions:--(1.) Honour the least of Christ's wherever you find it. If any should despise others for their meanness, it would be more proper to God to do so than for any other, because they are most distant from

his perfection; but he will not despise smoking flax,' Mat. xii. 20. You do not know what a spark of glory and of the divine nature may lie hid under smoke and a covert of darkness. Christ loved the young man that had but some accomplishments of nature in him,' Mark x. 21. Jesus loved him;' much more should you, when you find any weak appearances of Christ, though they do not come up to your measures. (2.) Let not difference in opinion divide you. It were to be wished that believers were of one heart and of one way--that they all thought and spoke the same thing; yet, if they differ, cherish them for what of God is in them. In a great organ the pipes are of a different size, which maketh the harmony and melody the sweeter: Whereunto we have attained, let us walk by the same rule, and mind the same thing,' Phil. iii. 16. Many men love to impropriate religion, as if there were nothing of God to be found but in their own sphere. It is natural to a man to do so. We would be singular, and engross all repute of piety, orthodoxy, and right worship to ourselves. (3.) Take heed of letting love degenerate into compliance. There is the bond of the Spirit,' Eph. iv. 3, and there is an unequal yoke,' 2 Cor. vi. 14; there are cords of love,' and the chain of antichristian interests, and you must be careful to make distinction, Isa. liv. 15. They shall gather, but not by me.' There are evil mixtures and confederacies that are not of God, which you must beware of, lest by joining with men you break with God, and turn love into compliance. The image was crumbled to pieces where the toes were mixed of iron and clay, Dan. ii. Love may forbear the profession of some truths--there is a having faith to ourselves'--but must not yield to error. (4.) There are some so vile that they will scarce come within the circuit of our Christian respect, such as are the open enemies of Christ, and hold things destructive to the foundation of religion: 2 John 10, If any one bring not this doctrine, bid him not God speed.'

Vile wretches must know the ill sense the church hath of their practices. Elisha would not have looked upon Jehoram, had it not been for Jehoshaphat, 2 Kings iii. 14. When men break out into desperate rage and enmity to the ways of Christ, or run into damnable errors, it is a compliance to show them any countenance. Thus for the compellation.

(2d.) The next circumstance in the occasion is, a testification of the greatness of his love and care: pasan spou`den poioumenos, When I gave all diligence.' He speaketh as if it were his whole care and thought to be helpful to their faith, and therefore did watch every occasion: he addeth to write to you, that is a further testimony of his love, that he would think of them absent; to write, when he could not speak to them. So that here are two things:--(1.) The greatness of his love; (2.) The way of expressing it, by writing.

Obs. 1. From the first, I gave all diligence, observe, that offices of love are most commendable when they are dispensed with care and diligence: it is not enough to do good, but we must do good with labour, and care, and diligence. See Titus iii. 14, Let ours also learn to maintain good works;' in the original, proistasthai kalon ergon, watch for good works, hunt out occasions. So Heb. x. 24, Consider one another, to provoke to love and good works:' it is not enough to admonish one another, but we must consider, study one another's tempers, that we may be most useful in a way of spiritual communion. So Rom. xii. 17, Providing for things honest in the sight of God and men,' pronoou'menoi, catering, contriving, as carnal men do for their lusts, Rom. xiii. 14. So for ministers; it is not enough for them to press that wherein they are most versed, or what cometh next to hand, but to study what will most conduce to the ends of their ministry with such a people: Study to approve thyself a good workman,' &c. Well, then, try

your Christian respects by it. The spirit is most pure, not only when you do good, but when you do it with care and diligence. Wicked men may stumble upon good, but they do not study to do good; common spirits are moved to pray, but they do not watch unto prayer, Eph. vi. 18; that is, make ii their care to keep their hearts in order, and expressly to suit their prayer to their present necessities; many may do that which is useful to the church, but they do not watch opportunities, and make it their design to be serviceable.

Again, let no care be grievous to you, so you may do good: I am willing to spend myself, and to be spent for you,' 2 Cor. xii. 15. We cannot be wasted in a better employment; so we shine, no matter though we burn down to the socket, or, like silk-worms, die in our work: Phil. ii. 17,

If I be offered upon the sacrifice of your faith, I rejoice with you,'

&c. The greatest pains and care, even to a maceration of ourselves, should not be unpleasing to a gracious heart. Certainly this is an expression will shame us: I gave all diligence; he sought all opportunities, when we will not take them. Love will put us upon searching out and devising ways of doing good.

Obs. 2. This love he would express by writing when he could not come to them. Holy men take all opportunities to do good; present or absent, they are still mindful of the saints, and write when they cannot speak: as Ambrose alludeth to Zacharias, writing when he was stricken dumb. [65] A man would think that absence were a fair excuse, a writ of ease served upon us by providence; yet godly men cannot be so satisfied, but must use all helps to promote the common benefits: a willing mind will never want an opportunity, and they that have a heart will be sure to find an occasion; they give all diligence to promote others' welfare; and therefore use all means, take all occasions. Which showeth--(1.) How far they are from this temper that do nothing but by constraint. A

ready mind' is a special qualification in an elder, 1 Peter v. 2, and a sure note of our reward, 1 Cor. ix. 17. But now when the awe of the magistrate prevaileth more than love of souls, everything is done grudgingly. It is Paul's advice, Be instant in season and out of season,' 2 Tim. iv. 2; not only at such seasons as are fairly offered, but where corruption and laziness would plead an excuse. Christ discoursed with the woman at the well when weary, John. iv. We have but a little while to live in the world, and we know not how soon we may be taken off from our usefulness; that was Peter's motive to write, 2 Peter i. 12, 13. (2.) This showeth their sottishness that are not careful to redeem opportunities for themselves. Jude is studying which way to promote the salvation of others, and many do not look to the state and welfare of their own souls. Again observe:--

Obs. 3. That writing is a great help to promote the common salvation. By this means we speak to the absent and to posterity; and by this means are the oracles of God preserved in public records, which other wise were in danger of being corrupted, if still left to the uncertainty of verbal tradition. By this means are errors more publicly confuted, and a testimony against them transmitted to future ages. Speech is more transient, but writing remaineth. So Christ telleth the apostles that they should bring forth fruit, and their fruit should remain,' John xv. 16. Apostolical doctrine being committed to writing, remaineth as a constant rule of faith and manners, and by the public explications of the church left upon record we come to understand the dispensations of God to every age, what measures of light they enjoyed, how the truths of God were opposed, how vindicated. Finally, by writing the streams of salvation are conveyed into every family, as a common fountain by so many pipes and conveyances, that in the defect of public preaching good supply may be had in this kind. Well, then, it is an

acceptable service to the church which they do who can handle the pen of the writer,' Judges v. 14, when they send abroad a public testimony against error, a public monument of their affection to the truth. The goose-quill hath smote antichrist under the fifth rib. The Earl of Derby accused Bradford for doing more hurt by his writings than preaching. Hezekiah's servants are commended for copying out' the Proverbs of Solomon, Prov. xxv. 1. They deserve not to be censured, but commended and cherished, that do service in this kind. I confess there is no end of books. Pride and ambition may put many upon scribbling, and filling the world with chaff and vanity; so that there needeth a restraint rather than an incitement. Some merely blur paper, [66] which is no small discouragement to modest and able men. Surely care should be taken to prevent abuse: [67] writing is a more public way of teaching, and men should not undertake it without a call. Jerome's advice is good, Ne ad scribendum cito prosilias, et levi ducaris insania; multo tempore disce quod doceas (Hier. ad Rusticum Mohachium)--be not too hasty to write; that which is prepared for public instruction had need be prepared with great deliberation. The vestal virgins were ten years in learning, and ten years in practising, and ten years in teaching and prescribing directions to others. [68] When every sciolist will be obtruding his notions upon the world, it is a great abuse; for by this means useful men are discouraged, or if they publish their labours, they are not taken notice of, as two or three grains of good corn are hardly found out under a heap of chaff. But take away this abuse, writing is a great help to the church in practicals, that people may still be furnished with good books in every age, old ones written long ago being neglected, or lying hid in some private studies, or else not coming up to the rate of present light, or not answering the temper of the present age, not meeting with the sins,

nor encouraging the graces within use and exercise. Again, in controversial there is great use of writing, controversies not being so easily determined by the judgment of the ear as the eye. In the clamour of disputations and violent discourse, usually there is such a dust raised, that we cannot so soon discern the truth as upon a calm debate and mature consideration of what is delivered in writing; which I remember was the cause why Tertullian wrote his treatise against the Jews, lest the tumult and noise of the dispute should be some prejudice to the truth. [69] But of this enough.

(3d.) I come now to the next circumstance in the insinuation or profession of his readiness to do them good, and that is the object or subject concerning which he would write to them, the common salvation, a fit argument for saints.

Obs. 1. The apostles, in their private and familiar letters, were very spiritual; yea, when they wrote about their ordinary occasions, as Paul to Philemon, still they were ready to impart some spiritual gift, whether by conference or writing. Those letters, then, should be most welcome to us that mind us of the best things.

But what was this common salvation?' I suppose by it is meant that salvation wherein he and they and all the saints were concerned. This expression may be conceived to be an argument, either of the apostle's meekness; though he were an apostle, and they private believers, yet I and you have but one common salvation;' as captains, to endear themselves to their troops, will say, Fellow soldiers, as engaged in one common warfare; or else of his holiness, the common salvation;' that is, which I am to look after as well as you; or else of his love to their salvation, which he would look after as well as his own. The saints carry on a joint trade to heaven; they are all partners, and salvation lieth in common between them: you are to promote mine, and I

yours. Well, then, he having their faith and salvation in like respect with his own, he was willing to write to establish them in the truth. I shall form the point in the very words of the text.

Obs. That the salvation of the people of God is a common salvation,--not to good and bad; for it belongeth only to a peculiar people,--but common to all believers: it is common to them in divers regards.

1. They all are chosen by the same grace; there is no special reason why Paul should obtain mercy rather than John, and Andrew, and Thomas. Free grace acteth upon the same terms. All God's motives are taken from himself, from his own bosom: For my own sake,' saith the Lord, Isa. xliii. 25. There may be a difference in the creature; John and Andrew may be otherwise tempered and disposed than Paul and Peter; but God's motives to choose both the one and the other are still the same.

2. They have the same Christ: There is no other name under heaven,' Acts iv. 12; and Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever,' Heb. xiii. 8. In all ages the church hath been saved by Christ; none of the holy ones of God had a more worthy Redeemer than we have. Christ gave the same ransom to purchase heaven for me, and thee, and others: as under the law, the rich and the poor were to give the same ransom: Exod. xxx. 15, The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel.' The price of Christ's blood for all souls was equal. If they had a more worthy Christ to die for them, you might be discouraged.

3. You are justified by the same righteous one as far as another: The righteousness of Christ is unto all, and upon all that believe, and there is no difference.' Rom. iii. 22. In inherent righteousness, there is a great deal of difference; one hath more grace, and another hath less. In sanctification there are degrees, but as to imputed

righteousness, they are all equal; none of the saints hath finer linen, or are decked with a better vesture than you are. There is a difference in the degree of faith, which receiveth this righteousness, but there is no difference in the righteousness itself. A giant or strong man holdeth a precious jewel, so doth a child; the jewel is the same; though a man holdeth it with a stronger hand, it loseth nothing of its worth in the child's hand. [70] So here the righteousness is the same, though the faith be not the same.

4. As we have the same privileges, so the same way; all by faith; and the faith of the weakest as to the essential privileges is as accept able to God as the faith of the strongest: 2 Peter i. 1, Simon Peter to them that have obtained like precious faith with us.' It is like precious for kind, though not degree; [71] of the same nature, worth, and property, though every one cannot come up to the height of an apostle.

5. They are all under the same rule and direction: Gal. vi. 16, As many as walk by this rule, peace on them, and the whole Israel of God.' The way of error is manifold, but there is but one path that leadeth to heaven.

6. They are in one mystical body, ministering supplies to one another: Col. ii. 19, Not holding the head, from which all the body, by joints and bands, having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.' The head is the fountain of all vital influence, but the joints and bands do minister and convey the nourishments; the whole body is still increasing and growing up to perfection, and they are helping one another, as the members of the same body do continue the communion of the same spirit, or, by the continuity of the parts, make way for the animation and quickening by the same soul.

What use shall we make of this? I answer:--

1. It hinteth public care, that we should help salvation forward, both in ourselves and others; rejoice in others' faith as well as in your own: Rom. i. 12, Comforted by the mutual faith of you and me.' His faith was a comfort to them, and their faith a comfort to him; nay, out of an excess of love and charity, Paul useth an expression not imitable: Rom. ix. 3, I could wish that I were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.'

2. It checketh the impropriating of grace and religion, to such an order or sort of Christians, such as was the ambition of former times; as if all religion were confined within a cloister, or wrapped up in a black garment; those were called religious houses, and those the clergy, or God's portion, all others were lay and secular. Oh! how far was this from the modesty of the apostles! Peter calleth the faith of common Christians, like precious faith;' and Jude speaketh of a common salvation.' So the Jews before them, they confined God's choice to their nation; they could not endure to hear of salvation among the Gentiles,' and of a righteousness that came to all, and upon all that believe.' We have an envious nature, and would fain impropriate common favours. The church of Rome would fain bring all the world to their lore, and confine truth and faith and salvation within the precincts of their synagogue; they seize upon and possess themselves of the keys of heaven, to open to whom they please. Now God hath broken down all pales and inclosures, they would fain rear up a new partition wall. Corrupt nature envieth that others should have a fellowship in our privileges, therefore the same spirit still worketh; men do so value their lesser differences, and that distinct way and opinion which they have taken up, as if none could be saved but those of their own party and persuasion; it is very natural to us to affix holiness to our own

opinions, and to allow none to be good but those that jump with us in all things. There were factions at Corinth, and those that said, I am of Christ,' were counted a faction too, 1 Cor. i. 12, as arrogating Christ to themselves; therefore the apostle writing to them, saith, 1 Cor. 1, 2, To the saints at Corinth, and all that call on the Lord Jesus Christ, theirs and ours.' We are apt to be rigid to those that differ from us, and to be favourable to those that think with us. Tertullian [72] saith of some in his time, Illic ipsum est promereri--it is holiness enough to be one of them. Oh! let it not be so among the people of God! do not nullify your brethren. Rom. xiv. 10, Why dost thou set at nought thy brethren? ti` exoutheneis, Tertullian rendereth it, Cur nullificas fratrem? When God hath made a Christian of him, why dost thou make nothing of him? and cry up every private opinion for another religion, as if none could be saints and believers but they that think with you? Take heed of impaling the common salvation; inclosures are against the law.

3. It showeth that there are not several ways to heaven, there is but one common salvation' to all the elect, and one common faith,' as Paul saith, Titus i. 4, To Titus my own son according to the common faith.' There are a sort of libertines that think a man may be saved in any religion, so he doth not walk against his own light. Do not flatter yourselves; all the elect are brought to heaven the same way, whether Jew or Gentile, bond or free;' there is a good old way, Jer. vi. 16, which if we miss we are sure to perish.

4. It informeth us who are best to deal in matters of religion; those that are religious, that can call it a common salvation;' that is, common to them with others; they have share in it, and therefore they can best defend it. Differences are aggravated when carnal men intermeddle in religious controversies, but those are likest to deal

with most purity of zeal and love that can say your salvation is their salvation; so in the next verse, They turn the grace of our God into wantonness;' they that have an interest in grace cannot endure to see it abused.

5. It forbiddeth scorn of the meanest Christian. They have as good hopes through grace as you have in Jesus Christ: all are one, master and servant, rich and poor. Onesimus, a poor runagate servant, yet being converted, Paul calleth him his faithful and beloved brother,' Philem. 10. In earthly relation there is a difference, yet in regard of the common faith and common salvation we are all one.

I have now done with the first part of the occasion, his earnestness in promoting their good. I now come to the second part, the urgency of the present necessity: It was needful for me to write to you, and exhort you, which is said to show that this epistle was not only occasioned by the fervency of his own love, but the present exigence and necessity as affairs then stood; the school of Simon, the Gnostics, and divers other heretics of a like loose strain and libertine spirit, sought to withdraw and alienate them from the truth, for that was the necessity here expressed, as appeareth by the next verse. Exhortations, the more necessary, the more pressing; need quickens both writer and reader; and the less arbitrary things are, the more tho roughly we go about them.

Obs. 1. Observe from hence, that necessity is a time for duty; necessity is God's season to work, and therefore it should be ours: For a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness,' 1 Peter i. 6. Duties are best done when we see they are needful and necessary; things that are arbitrary are done with a loose heart; the creatures' duty towards God begins at the sense of their own wants: James i. 5, If any man lack wisdom,' &c. Well, then, take this hint for prayer and other services; if there be a need, omit not to call upon God: as when distempers grow

upon the spirit, the heart is unquiet, the affections unruly, a deadness increaseth upon you, temptations are urgent, and, too strong for you, cry out of violence, as the ravished virgins. So when conscience is incessantly clamorous, David could not find ease till he confessed, Ps. xxxii. 5. Silence will cause roaring, and restraint of prayer, disquiet. Again, if there be a need, omit not to call upon men by exhortation and counsel, as when you see things grow worse every day, and can hold no longer: the king's danger made the king's dumb son speak: Paul was forced in spirit when he saw the whole city given to idolatry,' Acts xvii. 16. When we see men by whole droves running into error, and ways destructive to their souls, is there not a need? is it not a time to speak? Men say we are bitter, but we must be faithful. So they say the physician is cruel, and the chirurgeon a tyrant, when their own distempers need so violent a remedy: can we see you perish, and hold our peace?

Obs. 2. Observe again, that ministers must mainly press those doctrines that are most needful. It is but a cheap zeal that declaimeth against antiquated errors, and things now out of use and practice. We are to consider what the present age needeth. What use was it of in Christ's time to aggravate the rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram? Or now to handle the case of Henry the Eighth's divorce? what profit hence to our present auditories? There are present truths' to be pressed, 2 Peter i. 12; upon these should we bestow our pains and care. Usually when we reflect upon the guilt of the times, people would have us preach general doctrines of faith and repentance. But we may answer, It is needful for us to exhort you,' &c. To what end is it to dispute the verity of the Christian religion against heathens, when there are many seducers that corrupt the purity of it amongst ourselves? In a country audience, what profit is it to dispute against Socinians, when there

are drunkards, and practical atheists and libertines, that need other kind of doctrine? He that crieth out upon old errors not now produced upon the public stage, doth but fight with, ghosts and challenge the dead. So again, to charm with sweet strains of grace when a people need rousing, thundering doctrine, is but to minister cordials to a full and plethoric body, that rather needeth phlebotomy and evacuations. It is a great deal of skill, and God can only teach it us, to be seasonable to deliver what is needful, and as the people are able to bear.

Obs. 3. Again, observe, the need of the primitive church was an occasion to complete the canon and rule of faith. We are beholden to the seducers of that age that the scripture is so full as it is: we should have wanted many epistles had not they given the occasion. Thus God can bring light out of darkness, and by errors make way for the more ample discovery of truth.

I have done with the occasion. I come now to the matter and drift of this epistle, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith that was once delivered to the saints; in which there is a necessary duty pressed; and these two circumstances are notable--the act and the object. (1.) The act is to contend earnestly; it is but one word in the original, epagonizesthai; but it is a word of a vehement signification, and therefore fitly rendered to contend earnestly,' (2.) The object of this contention, which is, the faith once delivered to the saints. Faith may be taken either for the doctrine of faith or the grace of faith; [73] both are too good to be lost, either the word which we believe, or faith by which we believe; the former is intended: faith is taken for sound doctrine, such as is necessary to be owned and believed unto salvation, which he presseth them to contend for, that they might preserve it safe and sound to future ages. Now this faith is described--(1st.) By the manner of its conveyance, dothei'se, it is

given to be kept; it is not a thing invented, but given; not found out by us, but delivered by God himself; and delivered as to our custody, that we may keep it for posterity, [74] as the oracles of God in the Old Testament were delivered to the Jews to be kept by them, Rom. iii. 1. (2d.) By the time of its giving out to the world: the doctrine of salvation was given but once, as never to be altered and changed, once for all. (3d.) The persons to whom, to the saints; so he calleth the church according to the use of the scriptures, or else by saints is meant the holy apostles, given to them to be propagated by them. I shall first speak of the object, before I come to the duty itself; and because the description here used will agree both to the grace of faith and the doctrine of faith, though the doctrine of faith be mainly intended, yet give me leave a little to apply it to the grace: if it be a diversion, it shall be a short one.

Obs. 1. This faith is said to be given. Observe, that faith is a gift; so Phil. i. 29, To you it is given to believe;' umin echari'sthe, given freely, Eph. ii. 8, By grace ye are saved, through faith, not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.' We cannot get it of ourselves; a mere imagination and thinking of Christ's death is easy, but to bring the soul and Christ together requires the power of God, Eph. i. 19. We cannot merit it, and therefore it is a pure gift. God bestoweth it on them that can give nothing for it: works before conversion cannot engage God, and works after conversion cannot satisfy God. Well, then, let us admire the mercy of God in the covenant of grace. Christ is a gift: John iv. 10, If thou knewest the gift,' &c. His righteousness is a gift: Rom. v. 16, The free gift is of many offences unto justification;' and faith, which receiveth this righteousness, is a gift: so that all is carried in a way of grace; in the covenant of grace nothing is required but what is best owed. Again, it teacheth us

whither to go for faith: seek it of God, it is his gift; all the endeavour and labour of the creature will never procure it. But must we not use the means of prayer, meditation, and hearing, &c.? I answer--Yes; for (1.) God dispenseth it in a way of means: Mark iv. 24, With what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again, and unto you that hear more shall be given.' According unto the measure of our hearing, if the Lord will work, is the measure of our faith: Acts xvi. 14, The Lord opened Lydia's heart to attend to the things spoken by Paul.' God stirreth up to the use of means, and whilst we are taught' we are drawn,' John vi. 44, 45. (2.) Though faith be God's gift, man's endeavours are still necessary, for supernatural grace doth not exclude the ordinary and natural means. Marriage is necessary for the propagation of mankind, though the rational soul is from God; yea, more care is had of women with child than of brute beasts, because the fruit of the womb is the immediate work and blessing of the Lord: so faith is of God's planting, and therefore we should be the more careful in the use of means.

Obs. 2. This faith is said to be once given. This will also hold concerning grace; for where it is once planted it cannot be totally and finally destroyed; rather it is continually supplied by the care and faithfulness of God: see 1 Cor. i. 8, and 1 Thes. v. 24, and Phil. i. 6. And those hypocrites that fall off after a long profession seldom recover themselves by repentance,' Heb. vi. 6; 2 Peter ii. 21. Well, then, here is comfort to the people of God, that find so many lusts and so many temptations. They think they shall never hold out; faith is but once given: where it is really given there needeth not a second gift. Again, here is caution. Faith is a precious jewel; if once lost wilfully after the knowledge of the truth, it is not easily regained.

Obs. 3. Consider the persons to whom it is given. It is not given to

every one;' for all men have not faith,' 2 Thes. iii. 2; and the gospel is hidden to those that are lost,' 2 Cor. iv. 3; but it is given to the saints, to those who were chosen, that they might be saints: which showeth--(1.) The excellency of faith; it is a privilegiate and peculiar mercy. (2.) That believers are saints; faith giveth an interest in Christ, and therefore they must needs be holy: His blood cleanseth,' 1 John i. 7; His Spirit sanctifieth,' 1 Cor. vi. 11. Again, Faith itself hath a cleansing, purifying virtue: Hearts purified by faith,' Acts xv. 9. Faith applieth the blood of Christ; and the hand of the laundress is as necessary to cleanse the clothes as the soap wherewith they are cleansed. Faith waiteth for the Spirit. It argueth from the love of God. Faith and sin are like the poison and the antidote, always working one upon another, till faith hath gotten the mastery. Well, then, is your faith sanctifying? Strong persuasions of an interest in grace, and a loose life, will not suit: we are not perfectly clean and holy, but there will be strong desires and earnest groans after more holiness; as Ps. li. 10, and Rom. vii. 24, Who shall deliver me?' &c.; that is, Oh! that I were; questions are put for wishes. So Ps. cxix. 5, Oh! that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes.' Yea, there will be not only groans under, but strugglings against sin. A child of God may fall into sin, but he cannot rest in it and lie down with ease; as mud may be cast into a pure fountain, or stirred up in it, but the fountain never ceaseth till it work itself clean again. Peter and David stepped aside, but they could find no peace till they were reconciled to God: I will return to my first husband, then it was better than it is now,' Hosea ii. Again, you may know it by the drift and disposition of the heart. Which way lieth the bent of your spirits? and what are your constant motions and operations? A man that is travelling another way may now and then look

back. How is your heart inclined? Ps. cxix. 112, I have inclined my heart to perform thy statutes always unto the end.' Is there a constant inclination towards God? 1 Chron. xxii. 19, Now set your hearts to seek the Lord.' Is the heart set? what is your constant course and walk? Rom. viii. 1.

But so much for this digression, occasioned by the suitableness of words to the grace of faith. Let us now come to the other acception, which is more proper in this place, namely, as faith is put for the doctrine of faith. How this was--(1.) Delivered; (2.) Once delivered; (3.) To the saints.

First, Delivered, not invented; [75] it is not the fruit of fancy or human devising, but hath its original from God; it was delivered by him to holy men chosen for that purpose, and by them delivered by word of mouth to the men of that age wherein they lived, and by writing for the use of after ages: and delivered to be kept; it is a sacred depositum which God hath put into the hands of the church: Keep that which is committed to thy trust,' 1 Tim. vi. 20; and To them were committed the oracles of God.' Rom. iii. 2. I shall observe--(1.) The mercy of God in delivering this faith or rule of salvation. (2.) The duty of the church concerning it.

Obs. 1. The mercy of God in delivering this faith to chosen men, that by their means the world might come to the knowledge of it. The doctrine of salvation first came out from God, and then was conveyed to us by the hands of holy men. We are not sensible enough of the privilege, Ps. cxlvii. 19, 20, He showeth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and judgments unto Israel, he hath not dealt so with any nation,' &c. It is not a common mercy, for many nations want it; nor no casual thing. In the primitive times not only the doctrine of the apostles was directed and ordered by the Holy Ghost, but also their

journeys; the gospel came not to them by chance, but as a special gift from heaven. But that we may be more sensible of the privilege, I shall show you:--

1. The benefit of the word. By it God's heart is opened to us, and our own hearts to ourselves; by it we are acquainted with the way of salvation, and come to understand the courses of the Lord's justice and mercy, and in what manner he will govern and rule the world, which are altogether unknown to them that have not such a revelation delivered to them. We should never have known the cause of our misery, our fall in Adam, nor the means of our recovery, redemption by Jesus Christ, if they had not been delivered to us in this doctrine and rule of faith; we should never have known how to worship God, or enjoy God. If carnal men should have a liberty to let nature work, and set down a divinity of their own, what a goodly religion should we have in the world! a very comely chimera no doubt! For practicals it would be large enough I am sure, for natural conscience hateth fetters and restraints; in doctrinals it would be absurd enough. Man can never take a right draught and image of God. Who can empty an ocean with a cockle-shell? And since the fall we are grown quite brutish; our conceits are not so monstrous in anything as in the worship of God. The pagan philosophers, that were most profound in the researches and inquiries of reason, they sat abrood, and thought of hatching an excellent religion; but what was the issue? Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.' Rom. i. 22. All that they produced was fables and high strains of folly, mixed with popular rites and customs. There are many things necessary to religion, which the angels themselves could not have known if they had not been revealed, therefore their knowledge increaseth by observing God's dispensations to the church, Eph. iii. 10. The way of salvation by Christ is such a mystery as could not have entered into

the heart of any creature, no, not of an angel. If an angel had been to set down which way man should be redeemed, nay, if all the cherubim and seraphim, thrones, dominions, and powers had met together in a synod and council, and had taken in all the world to their assistance, it would have posed them all to have found out such a way as God hath appointed. But not to speak of mysteries. There is in the word some moralities suitable to the law of nature, which was once written upon man's heart; but alas! now there remains only some scattered fragments and obscure characters, so defaced that they cannot be read; and how blind are we in these things without the word! Witness the sottish idolatry of those nations that want it, worshipping stocks or stones, yea, a piece of red cloth, or whatever they saw first in the morning. And witness those brutish customs among other nations, whereby uncleanness and unnatural sins have been authorised by a law. Therefore, it is a great mercy that something is delivered, and given out as a rule of faith and manners.

2. That this tradition is written, and put into a stated course in those books which we call scriptures. If the revelation of God's will had been left to the tradition of men of such a rank or order, what a liberty might they take of coining oracles, and obtruding their fancies upon the world! It is a great mercy that our faith does not depend upon uncertain suggestions, but some main public records, to which all may appeal and find satisfaction. Heretofore the Lord revealed himself by visions, oracles, and dreams, to persons of eminent holiness and sanctity, that they might instruct others; which course was sure enough while the people of the world were but a few families, and the persons entrusted with God's message had authority and credit sufficient with the present age, and lived long to continue the tradition with the more certainty to future ages. But afterwards the Lord was pleased to speak

to his church both by word and writing. His word was necessary for further revealing and clearing up the doctrine of salvation; and writing was necessary, because when precepts were multiplied it was needful for men's memories that they should be written; the long life of God's witnesses was lessened, corruptions began to increase, Satan giving out lying oracles and visions, idolatrous rites and customs crept into the best families, Josh. xxiv. 3, Gen. xxxi. 19; the people of God were grown numerous enough to make a commonwealth and politic body; therefore, to avoid man's corruptions and Satan's deceits, the Lord thought fit that we should have a written rule at hand, as a public standard for the trial of all doctrines. God himself wrote the first scripture with his own finger upon tables of stone, Exod. xxiv. 12, and he commanded Moses and the prophets to do the same, Exod. xvii. 14, and xxxiv. 27; which dispensation of word and writing continued till Christ's time, who, as the great doctor of the church, perfected the rule of faith, and by the apostles, as so many public notaries, consigned it to the use of the church in all ages. When the canon began to be complete, the latter apostles pressed the receiving of it; and John, as the last, and as one who outlived all the rest, closeth up his prophecy thus, Rev. xxii. 18, 19, If any man add,' &c., and if any man take away,' &c., which doth not only seal up the book of the Revelation, but the whole canon and rule of faith; which indeed was a great mercy to the world: the Lord knew to what a liberty we inclined in divine things, and therefore we needed to be tied up to a rule, which here is given us.

3. The mercy of God appeareth in preserving it, that it may be delivered from one age to another. No doctrine so ancient as the doctrine of the scriptures; it describeth the whole history of the world from the very creation, and the original of all things. Where are

there records so ancient? and yet they have been preserved even to our time. We have some ancient writings of the heathens, though nothing so ancient as scripture; but these are not contrary to men's lusts, and have been cherished by them, and yet they have felt the tooth of time, and are in a great measure mangled; but the word of God hath been maligned and opposed, and yet it continueth, and holdeth up its head in the world: not only the main doctrine of the scriptures hath been continued, but no part of the word hath been falsified, corrupted, destroyed: the world wanted not malice nor opportunity; the powers of the world have been against it, and corrupt persons in the church have been always given to other-gospelling, Gal. i. 6, 7; 1 Tim. vi. 3; but still the scriptures have been wonderfully preserved, as the three children in the furnace, not a hair singed, not a jot and tittle of truth perished.

4. That God doth continually stir up men in the church, and be stow gifts upon them, for the opening and application of this faith and doctrine of salvation. Christ, that hath given prophets and apostles to the church to write scripture, hath also given pastors and teachers to open and apply scripture, that so still it might be delivered to the saints, and also to vindicate the doctrine of it when opposed. Every age that hath yielded the poison hath also yielded the antidote, that the world might not be without a witness. If there hath been an Arius, there hath been an Athanasius; if a Pelagius, there is also an Austin: the church hath never wanted help in this kind. Look, as in war, as the arts of battery and methods of destruction do increase, so also doth skill in fortification; and in the church God still bestoweth gifts for the further explication of truth.

5. That the light cometh to us, and shineth in this land. The gospel is a great national privilege: To you is this word of salvation sent,'

Acts xiii. 26. Pray mark, it is sent; he doth not say we have brought it to you, but it is sent; it is a token sent from heaven in love.

There is a mighty providence accompanieth the gospel; the journeys of the apostles, as I said but now, were ordered by the Spirit as well as their doctrine: Acts viii. 26, The angel of the Lord said to Philip, Arise, and go towards the south, towards the way that goeth. down to Jerusalem.' They went not as their own good affection carried them, but according to the Spirit's direction. So Acts xvi. 7-9, The Spirit suffered them not,' &c., as prophecy came not by the will of man,' 2 Peter i. 21; that is, the doctrine itself, so the delivery of it; the doctrine they had from the Holy Ghost, and also their commission and passport. You would stand wondering, and think it a special benefit, if in a time of drought the rain should fall on your field, and none else, if, as Gideon's fleece, your heritage should be wet, and all is dry round about you; or if the sun should be shut up to others, and shine only in your horizon, as it did in Goshen. This is a better blessing, and God hath a special hand in the progress of it; it goeth from place to place as the Lord will. Why should it come to us? our ancestors were of all nations most barbarous and portentous for their idolatries. [76] Why to us? No cause can be assigned but the free grace and gift of God.

6. That it is given to us in our persons in particular in the power and efficacy of it. It is offered to the nation, but bestowed upon us: John xiv. 22, How is it that thou wilt reveal thyself to us, and not unto the world?' Others have only truth presented to them obiter, by the by, for your sakes; but you are called according to purpose.' Rom. viii. 28. Though in the general means they have a like favour with you, yet you may observe the particular aim of God in continuing the gospel to England for your sakes.

Use. Well, then, acknowledge God in the truths that are delivered to

you out of the scriptures. Whatever means are used, God is the author of the doctrine, and the disposer of the message: receive it as the word of God,' and then it will profit you,' 1 Thes. ii. 13. If you had an oracle from heaven speaking to you on this wise, you would be more serious. It is as certain, yea, it is bebaioteros lo'gos, a more sure word,' 2 Peter i. 19, more sure than the oracle spoken of in the context. Regard the promises and threatenings of it with more reverence, as if God in person had delivered them to you. If you receive it as the word of God, and not of men,' what will you venture upon the promises of it? These are bills of exchange given you, that you may draw your estate into another country, that you may lay up treasures in heaven.' Neglect of the opportunity is a sign of unbelief. If one should proffer you a hundred pounds for the laying out of a penny, and you go away and never heed it, it is a sign you do not believe the offer. The recompenses of the word do far exceed all temporal emolument; if you do not heed them, it is a sign you do not believe them. So what will you forbear upon the threatenings of the word? If there were a law made that every time we deceive or slander one another, we should hold one of our hands in scalding lead for half an hour, men would be afraid of the offence. God hath told us that the wages of sin is death,' that we shall be plunged for evermore in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone;' and yet it doth not deter us from sin, and giving offence to God. If a man were told that he were in danger of a cruel death every moment if he did not presently get a pardon, he would not sleep till it were done. Natural men are in danger of hell every moment by the sentence of the word, and yet how backward are they to make their peace with God!

Obs. 2. The word delivered, implieth a leaving things in another's hand by way of trust, and so doth not only note the mercy of God, but the

duty of the church, to whom the oracles of God are committed to be kept. Whence observe, that God hath delivered the doctrine and rule of faith to the church as a public trustee, that it may be kept and employed to the uses of the truth. Let us a little see what is the church's duty towards the truth. I answer--(1.) To publish it to the present age. (2.) To keep it and preserve it for ages to come. So that to the present age we are witnesses, to the future trustees, Isa. xliii. 10.

1. To publish, own, and defend the truth, by profession and martyrdom; and therefore the church is called the pillar and ground of truth,' 1 Tim. iii. 15, namely, in respect of men, and as it holdeth it forth to the world; and therefore we ought to hearken to the church's testimony till we have better evidence. We do not ultimately resolve our faith into the church's authority, for the church's authority is not absolute, but ministerial; as a royal edict doth not receive credit by the officer and crier, he only declareth it and publisheth it; yet the church's testimony is not to be neglected, for faith cometh by hearing.' Rom. x. 14, and this publication of the church is a good preparative inducement, John iv. 42. If we would know the truth of a thing, till we have experience we go to those that have experience, and ordinarily the judgment of others whom we respect and reverence causeth us to have a good opinion of a thing till we make trial ourselves: in which respect Austin saith, I had never believed the scriptures unless I had been moved thereunto by the authority of the church; [77] as we should never have known the king's pleasure unless the messenger had brought us his letters. The church hath not power to make and unmake scripture at pleasure, but only to communicate and hold forth the truth; and till we have further assurance, is so far to be heard. We receive the faith per ecclesiam, by the ministry of the church, though

not propter ecclesiam, for the authority of the church.

2. The next office of the church is to preserve the truth, and transmit it pure to the next age. As the law was kept in the ark, so was truth delivered to the church to be kept: 1 Tim. i. 11, The glorious gospel committed to my trust.' There is a trust lieth upon us; upon the apostles first to publish the whole counsel of God, and then upon pastors and teachers in all ages to keep it afoot, and upon all believers and members of the church to see that after ages be not defrauded of this privilege. We are to take care that nothing be added, Deut. iv. 2, and xii. 32; there is enough to make the man of God perfect;' nothing diminished; none of the jewels which Christ hath left with his spouse must be embezzled; that it be not corrupted and sophisticated; for we are not only to transmit to the next age the scriptures, those faithful records of truth, but also the public explications of the church in summaries and confessions must be sound and orthodox, lest we entail a prejudice upon those that are yet unborn. Every one in his place is to see that these things be accomplished. So much for the tradition itself.

Secondly, Now for the manner, once delivered; that is, once for all, as never to be altered and changed; and when the canon or rule of faith was closed up, there was nothing to be added further, as a part of the authentic and infallible rule, though the daily necessities of the church do call for a further explication. But you will say, You told us but now how the word was many times delivered, how then once? I answer--The apostle speaketh not of the successive manifestations of God's will to prophet after prophet till the Old Testament was perfected, but of that common doctrine which the apostles and evangelists by one consent had published to the world, and which was now to settle into a rule, and so to remain without change till the

coming of the Lord. Observe, that the doctrine of salvation was but once delivered, to remain for ever without variation. Paul chideth them for being withdrawn to another gospel,' Gal. i. 6; and Peter telleth them, to prevent the reception of feigned oracles, that they had a surer word of prophecy,' 2 Peter i. 19, a safe rule to trust to; and Paul biddeth Timothy continue in the things which he had learned,' 2 Tim. iii. 14, 15; and our Lord saith, Mat. xxiv., This word of the kingdom shall be preached to all nations.' Now the doctrine of salvation is but once delivered--(1.) Because all is done so fully and perfectly, that nothing can be added; there is enough to make us wise to salvation,' 2 Tim. iii. 15, and what should Christians desire more? There is enough to make the man of God perfect,' ver. 17, that is, to furnish him with all kind of knowledge for the discharge of his office; there needeth no more; there is enough to make us wise to preach, and you wise to practise; and it is certain enough that you need not spend your time in doubting and disputing; and it is full enough, you need nothing more to satisfy the desires of nature, or to repair the defects of nature: here is sufficient instruction to decide all controversies, and assoil all doubts, and to give us a sure conduct to everlasting glory. (2.) Because this rule can never be destroyed. The word hath often been in danger of being lost, but the miracle of its preservation is so much the greater. In Josiah's time there was but one copy of the law; in Diocletian's time there was an edict to burn their bibles, and copies were then scarce and chargeable; yet still they were kept, and so shall be to the end of the world, for the sacraments must continue till Christ come,' Mat. xxviii. 20, and 1 Cor. xi. 26; and the word must be preached till we all grow into a perfect body in Jesus Christ,' Eph. iv. 12, 13; not only de jure, but de facto, not only it must be so, but it shall be so. Well, then, expect not new revelations or

discoveries of new truths beside the word, which is the immutable rule of salvation: Hold fast till I come.' Rev. ii. 25. Again, it checketh them that expect new apostles, endowed with a spirit of infallibility, to resolve all doubts and questions. We must give heed to the scriptures, till the day-star arise in our hearts,' that is, till we have full communion with Christ; for our reward in heaven is expressed by the morning star:' Rev. ii. 28, To him that overcometh I will give the morning star.' Again, it confuteth the Familists, that dream of some days of the Spirit, wherein we shall have a greater light than is in the scriptures; they fancy the time of the law to be the days of the Father, the time of the gospel to be the days of the Son, and the latter end of the world to be saeculum Spirilus Sancti (as the Weigelians phrase it), the age of the Holy Ghost; but foolishly, for these are the last times,' Acts ii. 17, and Heb. i. 1; and the Holy Ghost was never more gloriously poured out than at Christ's ascension, and greater things cannot be revealed to us than God in Christ reconciling the world,' Lastly, it is for the comfort of the saints that their salvation is put into a stated course, and God hath showed you what you must do if you would inherit eternal life.

Thirdly, The next circumstance is the persons to whom it was delivered, to the saints. It may be understood of the apostles, to whom it was delivered to be propagated; or of the church, to whom it was delivered to be kept, and who, in the constant use of scripture, are called saints. Observe, that saints are most interested in the acknowledgment, propagation, and defence of truth. The Christian faith was delivered to saints, and by saints, and none receive it so willingly, and defend it so zealously, and keep it so charily and faithfully as they do. (1.) The men that the Spirit of God made use of as penmen were holy men,' specially purified and sanctified for this work: 2 Peter i. 21, Holy

men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost;' and Eph. iii. 5, Revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.' These men were the fittest instruments to beget an external repute to the word. Surely they would not do anything for their own ends, and obtrude their own inventions upon the world as oracles from God. A carnal man's testimony is liable to suspicion. Who would count that wholesome that cometh from a leprous hand? Yea, those that were not of eminent sanctity were not fit for such an employment: a novel doctrine, such as the gospel seemed to be in the world, needed all the advantages that might be, to gain a title and interest in their belief; therefore did the Lord make use of such holy and self-denying persons, who expected to gain nothing but ignominy, poverty, afflictions, bonds, death; these things did abide for them in every city. (2.) Holy persons are only fit to preach the faith; sancta sanctis, holy men for holy things; it is an holy faith, and therefore fit to be managed by holy persons, that their hearts may carry a proportion with their work: Isa. lii. 11, Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord.' The officers that carried the vessels and utensils of the temple out of Babylon were to take care of their cleanness. God purified Isaiah when he sent him to reprove, Isa. vi. 7, and the priests under the law that ministered before the Lord were to wash in the great laver. Re generation is the best preparation for the ministry. Others disparage their testimony, and bring a reproach upon the gospel. People think we must say somewhat for our living, and so give us the hearing, but that is all. Oh! think of it, the credit of Christ lieth at stake; and since miracles are ceased, all the external confirmation that we can add to the word is by holiness of conversation. The Levites first cleansed themselves, and then cleansed the people, Neh. xii. 30. The life of a minister is much either to edification or destruction; they take the lesson rather from your lives

than your mouths, and by your levity or vanity sin cometh to be authorised: in short, either your doctrine will make your life blush, or your life will make your doctrine blush, and be ashamed. [78] (3.) None are fit publicly to defend the truth but the holy; they speak with more power, as from the heart and inward experience, and are more zealous as being more nearly concerned. They that partake of God's nature will soonest espouse God's cause and quarrel, and their zeal is most pure. Carnal men pervert religious differences; they change the nature of them, turning them into a strife of words, or a contention for interests; matters are not managed so purely as when there is conscience on both sides. The saints contend best for the saints' faith: We can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth,' 2 Cor. xiii. 8. Zeal in carnal men is like fire in straw, quickly up and quickly down; but in the godly, it is like fire in wood, longer kept: Wisdom is justified of her children,' Mat. xi. 19; they are fittest to interpose. Again, false zeal is most passionate, without pity and meekness; but the flame is most pure and bright in a holy heart, which is subdued to the power of truth. (4.) None receive the truth so willingly as the saints do. Holy persons can best understand what was written by holy men, they pierce into it more deeply; as iron that is red hot runneth further into the board than a sharp tool that is cold. God unbosometh himself to his familiars, Ps. xxv. 14; John vii. 17. Holy hearts are not clouded with the mists of lusts and interests. Where there is purity there is brightness; mou ka'tharsis e'llampsis (Nazi. Orat. ut memini 40); the mind being separated from gross things, is fitted for the reception of spiritual mysteries. Paul saw most of God when he was blind to the world; the heart being taken off from the world, is erected to things supernatural and of a higher cognisance. (5.) None retain the truth more firmly than the saints do. Manna was

kept in a golden vessel, and so is truth in a pure soul: 1 Tim. iii. 9, Holding the mystery of faith in a pure conscience.' Holiness doth not blunt the wit, but sharpen; none have a worse spiritual sight than they that lack grace, 2 Peter i. 9. An unclean vessel soureth the liquor that is put into it; so doth a carnal heart pervert the faith and taint the judgment. Let a man once be given up to some great lust, and you shall soon find him to be given up to some roaring error also; and when once they come to make shipwreck of a good conscience,' they do not long hold the faith that was once given to the saints, for grace and truth always thrive together.

I come now to the main observation that is to be drawn from these words.

Doct. That it is the duty of Christians in times of error and seducement to contend earnestly for the faith once given to the saints. It is their duty at all times, but then especially--(1.) That we may not discredit ourselves and the truth. (2.) That we may not hazard ourselves and the truth.

1. Let me first speak to the discredit, and there I shall show--(1.) That truth is honoured by a bold and resolute defence of it. We are not ashamed of it, though it be questioned and scorned in the world: Mat. xi. 19, Wisdom is justified of her children.' Neither John's doctrine nor Christ's doctrine would relish with the world, yet some had a reverent opinion of it for all that: Ps. cxix. 126, 127, They make void thy law, therefore I love it above pure gold.' In times of defection our love to God and the ways of God should be the greater; as fountain water is hottest in coldest weather. It was an honour to the Christian religion that the primitive professors were glad of an occasion to die for it, [79] and the more it was despised and persecuted, the more did they own it; falsehoods cannot endure the brunt of opposition. (2.)

That we may not dishonour ourselves, and discredit our own profession. He is but an ill servant of Christ that will not serve him when the Lord hath need of him;' when God distinguisheth sides, and crieth out, Who is of my side, who?' Exod. xxxii. 26. Times of error and seducement are searching, trying times. Light chaff is carried about with every wind, but the solid grain lieth still upon the ground: The approved are made manifest,' 1 Cor. xi. 19. There is a time not only to show love, but valour: Jer. ix. 3, They are not valiant for the truth upon the earth.' To be valiant for truth is to defend it in time of opposition, and to sparkle so much the more in a holy zeal because they pervert the right ways of the Lord. A Christian must have a heart as well as a liver; not only love the truth, but contend for it, and the more earnestly the more it is opposed. The apostle saith that a bishop must hold fast the word of truth,' Titus i. 9, antecho'menon. The word signifieth a holding it fast against a contrary force; as when a man seeketh to wrest a staff out of another's hand, he holdeth it the faster.

2. The next reason is, that we may not endanger and hazard ourselves and the truth. (1.) That we may not endanger ourselves. It is good to be able to defend religion when it is questioned; ignorant, secure, and careless spirits will certainly miscarry. Present truths and present errors have an aspect upon our interests; we must determine one way or another. Now how easily are they carried away with interests that have no principles, no i'diou ste'rigmou, 2 Peter iii. 17, no proper ballast in their own spirits! Therefore let us strive to know the truth, to own the truth in a time of trial; it is needful. All errors and heresies are but men's natural thoughts gotten into some valuable opinion, because backed with the defences of wit and parts. What are all the learned disputes against the truth, but the props of those vulgar

misprisions and gross conceits that are in the heart of every natural and ignorant man? We have all a heretic in our bosoms, and are by nature prepared to drink in all kinds of errors and lies, and therefore we are said, Ps. lviii. 3, to speak lies from the womb,' because these things are in our natures. We are born Pelagians, and Libertines, and Papists. [80] As in the new nature there is a cognation and proportion between us and truth, so in the old nature there is an inclination to all manner of errors. Luther saith, Every man is born with a pope in his belly. And Mr Greenham hath a saying, that if all errors, and the memorials of them, were annihilated by the absolute power of God, so that there should not the least remembrance of them remain, yet there is enough in the heart of one man to revive them again the next day. Certainly whatever is suggested from without doth very well suit with the carnal thoughts that are in our own bosoms. Look upon any error or blasphemy that is broached in the world, and you will find it true. Is atheism vented? The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God,' Ps. xiv. 1. Gentilism, or the doctrine of many gods? So do we set up many gods; whatever we fear or love, that we worship: Whose god is the belly,' Phil. iii. 19. Every man naturally is a pagan and idolater. Pelagian tenets, wherein original sin is denied, are natural. Common people think they had ever a good heart towards God: All these have I kept from my youth,' Mat. xix. 20. Chance and fortune, in a contradiction to God's decrees, are a man's natural opinions. So the doctrine of works and merit is in every man's heart. What question more rife, when we begin to be serious, than What shall I do?' A ceremonious ritual religion is very pleasing to carnal sense; conjectural persuasions is but a more handsome word for the thoughts of ignorant persons; they say they cannot be assured, but they hope well. Doctrines of liberty are very suitable also to corrupt nature: Cast away the

cords,' Ps. ii.; and Who is lord over us?' Ps. xii. 4. Nay, all sins are rooted in some error of judgment, and therefore they are called errors,' Ps. xix. 12. Well, then, for our own caution we had need stand for the truth, because error is so suitable to our thoughts; now when it spreadeth further, it is suitable also to our interests, and then we are in great danger of being overset. (2.) That we may not hazard the truth. When errors go away without control, it is a mighty prejudice both to the present and the next age: The dwellers upon earth' rejoiced when God's witnesses were under hatches, and there was none to contest with them, Rev. xi. 10. Fools must be answered, or else they will grow wise in their own conceit,' Prov. xxvi. 4, 5. Error is of a spreading, growing nature, therefore it is not good to retreat and retire into our own cells from the heat and burden of the day; let us stand in the gap and make resistance as God giveth ability. Two motives will enforce this reason:--(1.) The preciousness of truth: Buy the truth and sell it not.' It is a commodity that should be bought at any rate, but sold by no means, for the world cannot bid an answerable price for it. Christ thought it worthy his blood to purchase the gospel; by offering up himself he not only procured the comfort of the gospel, but the very publication of the gospel; therefore we should reckon it among our treasures and choicest privileges, and not easily let it go, lest we seem to have cheap thoughts of Christ's blood. (2.) The trust that is reposed in us for the next age, that is an obligation to faithfulness. We are not only to look to ourselves, but to posterity, to that doctrine which is transmitted to them; one generation teacheth another. And as we leave them laws and other national privileges, so it would be sad if we should not be as careful to leave them the gospel: Our fathers told us what thou didst in their days,' Ps. xliv. 1. Every age is to consider of the next, lest we entail a prejudice upon them

against the truth. What cometh from forefathers is usually received with reverence: A vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers,' 1 Peter i. 18. If you be not careful you may sin after you are dead; our errors and evil practices being continued and kept afoot by posterity. All the world had been lost in error and profaneness, if God had not stirred up in every age some faithful witnesses to keep up the memory of truth. There is in man a natural desire to do his posterity good; love is descensive. Oh! consider, how shall the children that are yet unborn come to the knowledge of the purity of religion, without some public monument or care on your part to leave religion undefiled? Antichrist had never prevailed so much if men had thought of after ages; they slept, and unwarily yielded to encroachment after encroachment, until religion began to degenerate into a fond superstition, or bundle of pompous and idle ceremonies; and now we see how hard it is to wean men from these things, because they have flowed down to them in the stream of succession, and challenge the authority and prescription of ancient customs. Look, as sometimes the ancestor's guilt is measured into the bosom of posterity, because they continued in their practices, Mat. xxiii. 35, That upon you may come all the righteous blood,' &c.; so many times the miscarriages of posterity may justly be imputed to us, because they shipwrecked themselves upon our example: The fathers ate sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge.' Well, then, let us perform the part of faithful trustees, and keep the doctrine of salvation, as much as in us lieth, pure and unmixed.

Use. It presseth us to this earnestness of contention and zeal for the truths of God. We live in a frozen age and cursed indifferency hath done a great deal of mischief. Christians! is error grown less dangerous, or the truth of religion more doubtful? Is there nothing

certain and worth contention, or are we afraid to meddle with such as shroud themselves under the glorious name of saints? We will not oppose saints, and so let the truth' go that was given to the saints, to be kept by them. Oh! my brethren, Paul withstood Peter to the face when truth was like to suffer, Gal. ii. 11. So should we with stand them to the face rather than make such sad work for the next age, and leave our poor babes to the danger of error and seduction. What is become of our zeal? There is none valiant for the truth upon the earth.' Prejudices and interests blind men so that they can not see what they see, and are afraid to be zealous, lest they should be accounted bitter. We have been jangling about discipline, and now doctrine itself is like to escape us. In the name of God let us look about us. Are there not crafty thieves abroad that would steal away our best treasure, and in the midst of the scuffle cheat us and our posterity of the gospel itself. We have been railing at one another for lesser differences, and now we begin to be ashamed of it. Satan hopeth that error and blasphemy itself shall go scot-free. Ah! my brethren, it is time to awake out of sleep. Whilst we have slept the enemy hath come and sown tares. What a tattered religion shall we transmit to ages to come; if there be not a timely remedy! To help you I shall show:--

1. What we must contend for.

2. Who must contend, and in what manner.

1. What we must contend for. For every truth of God, according to its moment and weight. The dust of gold is precious; and it is dangerous to be careless in the lesser truths: Whosoever shall break the least of the commandments, and teach men so to do,' &c., Mat. v. 19. There is nothing superfluous in the canon. The Spirit of God is wise, and would not burden us with things unnecessary. Things comparatively little may be great in their own sphere, especially in their season, when they are

the truths of the present age, and now brought forth by God upon the stage of the world, that we may study his mind in them. Better heaven and earth should be blended together in confusion, saith Luther, than one dust of God's truth should perish. [81] If the Lord call us out to the defence of them, what ever cometh of it we must be faithful. A man may make shipwreck of a good conscience in small matters. Say not, It is a little one, and my soul shall live.' Hearken to Satan, and this will be a little one, and that shall be a little one, till we have littled away all the principles of faith. I tell you, the world hath counted those small things for which the children of God have ventured their all. It is your duty to take the little foxes,' Cant. ii. 15. The first appearances of error are many times modest. There is a chain of truths; the devil taketh out a link here and a link there, that all may fall to pieces. See 2 Thes. ii. 2, Let no man deceive you with such doctrine as that the day of Christ is at hand.' Why? They might say there is no great danger in that. Peter saith, The end of all things draweth nigh,' 1 Peter iv. 7. The seducers said, ene'steke, it is at hand;' and Peter saith, e'ngike, it draweth nigh.' Here is no great difference. Ay! but be not shaken in mind, saith Paul, neither by letter nor by word nor by spirit, as if the day of the Lord were at hand;' that is, take heed of such suggestions, under what pretence soever they are brought to you, either of revelations or collections from my doctrine; it is all a falsehood. Why is Paul so earnest? Because Satan had an aim to make them look for the sudden coming of Christ, which not happening accordingly, to make them fall a-questioning all the truths of God. [82] So Gen. iii. 3, Ye shall not eat nor touch lest ye die.' That was Satan's repetition. Whereas God had said, Gen. ii. 17, Thou shalt surely die.' No great difference, but Satan got a great deal of advantage by it. Therefore be not ignorant of

Satan's devices.' The Council of Nice would not gratify Arius in a letter, [83] and Nestorius in a letter. [84] The lesser truths are not to be slighted in their time and place; they deserve an earnest contention. The martyrs were not foolish nor prodigal of their lives; they knew what they did when they durst not give place for a moment. All this is not spoken to justify undue rigours, such as are without any temper of Christian moderation, or those frivolous controversies about trifles, such as have no foundation in the word; as about the observance of Easter between the eastern and western churches, which difference grew so high that they excommunicated each other; or about celebrating the Lord's Supper with leavened or unleavened bread; or the fierce bickerings between Chrysostom and Epiphanius about Origen's books, set on by Theophilus, in pursuit of which many were slain, the senate house pulled down, and the great church at Constantinople set on fire; nor to justify mere verbal strifes about words and names,' forbidden by the apostle, 2 Tim. ii. 14; 1 Tim. vi. 4. Vainglorious men, if they can get but a different method of expression, cry, No new light, and so there is a great deal of noise stirred up about a mistake. Nor to justify the breaking of church fellowship and communion, and making rents in the body of Christ, because of difference of opinion in smaller matters, when we agree in the more weighty things. We are to walk together as far as we are agreed,' Phil. iii. 16; and externals wherein we differ, lying far from the heart of religion, are nothing to faith and the new creature, wherein we agree, Gal. v. 6, and vi. 15. The most weight should be pitched upon the fundamentals and essentials of religion; and when there is an agreement there, private differences in smaller matters should not make us break off from one another. False zeal is unevenly carried out to these lower things, both in opinion and practice; and usually young professors are

eager upon disputes, impatient of contradiction, and lay out all their strength this way, to excuse their care in the more weighty matters of Christianity; whereas the kingdom of God doth not stand in meat and drink, but in peace and righteousness and joy in the Holy Ghost.' Rom. xiv. 17. The itch of disputing and zeal for an opinion, rather than religion in the main, are bad characters. Again, when men, though in the right, think there is no religion or holiness but within the compass of such an opinion, this is censorious rigour, or to be righteous over-much,' Eccles. vii. 17; or when a lesser dissent is loaded with all the odious consequences that you can fancy in your thoughts, though disclaimed by the party dissenting; when Eloi is turned into Elias, and things are perverted by a misinterpretation, as Christ's words were, John ii. 19, compared with Mat. xxvi. 61;--briefly, when men upon every small occasion draw all things to extremity, and break out into contumely, revilings, persecution, biting and devouring one another, [85] it is not zeal, but fierceness and brutish immoderation. Therefore, all this excepted, it standeth us upon to be zealous even to sufferings for the lesser truths, that we may prevent the further encroachments of Satan, and antichrist, his eldest son, upon the liberties and privileges of the saints.

But now, besides the lesser things, there are fundamentals and essentials in religion, which challenge the choicest of our care and zeal, that they may be kept entire and without violation; the ignorance of them is damnable, and the denial heretical: to determine what they are is an undertaking of great concernment to the Christian world, but of too high a nature for the present exercise. I shall only mention a few points which seem to be en pro'tois, matters concerning the foundation; as the creation of the world by God in six days out of nothing, God's providence, man's misery by sin, deliverance by Christ,

the necessity of the new creature, the resurrection of the dead, and the everlasting recompenses. These are points of the greatest moment, though I cannot but say that others also are fundamental; [86] but these come to mind as being of the most practical concernment.

2. Who must strive, and in what manner. I answer--All in their place, and in that way that is proper to them.

[1.] Private Christians must have a share in this holy contention; their duty is partly--(1.) To search out the truth, that they may not fight blindfold, or by an unhappy mistake lavish out their zeal upon fancies which they affect, or ordinances and doctrines of men. People are never so furious as when they have least ground and reason for what they assert; yea, and error never prevaileth so much as when Christians are all flame and affection without judgment, and do not understand the reasons of that religion which they do profess. See 1 Peter iii. 15, A reason of the hope that is in you;' and 2 Peter iii. 17, i'dion ste'rigmon, their own steadfastness;' that is, such a steadfastness as doth arise from solid grounds in their own hearts, and not merely from the consent of others. (2.) To own the profession of the truth, whatever it cost them. I say, it is their duty to own the profession of the truth; for the public owning of the people it is a great let and restraint to tyranny, and such innovations as otherwise a carnal magistrate would introduce into the church by force and power. See Acts iv. 21, they let them go because of the people; so Mat. xiv. 5, and xxi. 46. And again, I say they must own it whatever it cost them, for zealous defences are a great honour to the truth. The disputations of the doctors do not commend it to the world so much as the death of the martyrs; and therefore, though you cannot dispute for the truth, yet you should die for the truth: Ye have not yet resisted unto blood,' &c., Heb. xii. 4. We cannot be at too much cost to preserve so precious

a treasure to posterity. And here even women may put in a share; they have lives to sacrifice upon the interest of the truth, and usually they do not fall in vain. [87] (3.) To honour the truth by their conversations: there are heretical manners as well as heretical doctrines; and-there are many that are otherwise of an orthodox belief, yet make others sectaries and disciples of their vices: some live atheism; there are Antinomians in practice; an apostate is a practical Arminian. Therefore Christians are called to hold forth the word of life' in their conversations, Phil, ii. 16; and to make the doctrine of God the Saviour comely,' Titus ii. 10, by glorifying God in that course of life to which they are disposed. To preach and write for the truth doth not honour it so much as to walk in the truth,' 3 John 4; and the life is a better witness of the reality of religion than the tongue. [88] (4.) To comprise all in a few words, whatever maketh for the truth, either with God or men, all that must the people do: We can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth,' saith Paul, 2 Cor. xiii. 8. To God you must pray, that he would send forth not only labourers, but champions, Mat. ix. 38; not only such as can handle the trowel, but the sword in the battles of the church. To men, you are to quicken those that have gifts to look to their duty in this kind: [89] Say to Archippus, Take heed to thy ministry which thou hast received in the Lord,' Col. iv. 17. Many may be stirred up by your exhortations, that otherwise would lie useless in idleness and privacy: in the battle the trumpeter hath his use as well as the soldier. Neither are they to be admonished only, but assisted; and by that means you have an interest in the glory of the work: 3 John 8, We ought to receive such, that we may be fellow-helpers to the truth;' su'nergoi, co-workers; your helping hand is to the action, and God will not be unmindful of it: yea, if you bear any part of the toil, by performing any labour of love

to them, it shall turn to a good account in the day of the Lord. Hezekiah's servants did but copy out the proverbs, and it is mentioned to their praise, Prov. xxv. 1. All this may be done by persons of a private gift and station.

[2.] There is something that the magistrate may do: He is the minister of God for good.' Rom. xiii. 4; not only for good civil, but spiritual; and therefore doth the apostle bid us pray for them, that they may be keepers of both the tables: 1 Tim. ii. 2, That we may lead a quiet life under them, in all godliness and honesty.' Heathens have asserted, that it belongeth to the magistrates' duty chiefly to look after matters of religion; [90] much more is it evident by the light of Christianity. The kings of the Old Testament are commended for their zeal in this kind; and in the times of the gospel it is prophesied that kings shall be the church's nursing fathers, and queens her nursing mothers,' Isa. xlix. 23, which they cannot be if they suffer poison to be given to God's little ones without any let and restraint. It is a clear truth that if a man give up himself to Christ, he is to give up himself to him in every relation; his wit, wealth, parts, authority, all to be laid out for the use and service of Christ: he that doth not give up all, giveth nothing; we are to be Christ's in every capacity. Therefore a magistrate as a magistrate must not only countenance religion, but also discountenance error, and hinder the spreading of it within his charge. It is by Christ that kings reign,' Prov. viii. 15, from him they received their power, and to him must they give an account of the exercise of it in the great day of recompenses; therefore they are bidden to be wise and to kiss the Son,' Ps. ii. 10-12, which certainly noteth more than a negative act or not opposing: there must be something positive, a zealous defence of the truth in their way, or else God will reckon with them. Those Gallios that are indifferent to

Christ and antichrist cannot expect a long and happy reign. I cannot see how they can be true to civil interest unless they be careful for the suppression of error; for when false doctrines are freely vented, it is to be supposed they will find a general reception, for the most are the worst; and then, when the generality of a nation are corrupted, national judgments will not long be kept off, the whole body is sure to smart for it; for, as the Jewish proverb is, two dry sticks will set a green one on fire. Besides that error is masterly and bloody, and loveth to give law; therefore, ere it be too late, they should look to the civil peace, for if men be quiet, God will not, when his honour and truth and worship is neglected. But of this more hereafter.

[3.] Ministers are to contend for the truth, for by their office and station in the church they are captains of the people in this war against Satan and his adherents; therefore it is required of them that they should be able to handle the sword and the trowel; not only to exhort by sound doctrine,' but to convince the gainsayers,' Titus i. 9. These are pi'stoi a'nthropoi, 2 Tim. ii. 2, The faithful men,' the feoffees in trust, to whom truth is committed; they are the salt of the earth, Mat. v. 13, those that must season the world with gracious principles; therefore they must above all others labour in the defence of the truth, otherwise they are compared to dumb dogs that bark not' when the thieves come to steal away the treasure, Isa. lvi. 10, 11. Now ministers must contend, partly by preaching, warning the people of the wolves that are abroad, Acts xx. 29; partly by disputing, Acts xv. 2, and xviii. 28, that by the knocking of flints light may fly out, and that truth may beat its enemy hand to hand in the open field; and partly by writing, [91] for many times disputes are carried on with so much tumult and popular noise, that truth is lost in the crowd; besides, by this means we are a help to posterity, that, together with

the poison, the antidote may be transmitted to them.

[64] Summus utriusque Inde furor vulgo, quod numina vicinorum Odit uterque locus.'--Juvenal.

[65] Zacharias, cum loqui non potuit, scripsit.'

[66] Scribunt doctique indoctique poemata passim.'--Juvenal.

[67] Councils have thought it worthy their care, vide Canones Apostolorum (ut vocant), Can. 60.--Synod. Dordrec. Consilia de corrigendis typographiae abusibus.--Sess. 222.

[68] Eis te`n me`n pro'ten dekati'an a` chre dran mantha'nousi, ten de me'sen a' memathe'kasi drosi, ten de tri'ten ete'ras autai` dida'skousi.'--Plutarchus in Vita Numcae.

[69] Alternis vicibus contensioso fune uteque diem in vesperam traximus, obstrepentibus etiam quibusdam spectantibus, singulorum nubilo quodam veritas obumbrabatur.'--Tertul. contra Judaeos.

[70] Gemmam annulo curvo inclusam amplectitur et gigas, amplectitur et puerulus. Licet gigas fortius eam amplectatur quam puerulus, tamen manet annulus aeque preciosus et gemma aeque preciosa.'--Luther.

[71] Fides una et eadem, non respectu subjectorum graduum sed respectu objecti finis.'

[72] Tertul. in Praescrip adversus Haereticos.

[73] Fides est duplex, fides quae creditur, et fides qua creditur.'

[74] Aliquid tibi traditum, non a te inventum; aliquid quod accepisti, non exagitasti,' &c.--Vincentius Lyrinensis.

[75] Quod tibi creditum, non a te inventum; quod accepisti, non excogitasti.'--Vinc. Lyrinensis.

[76] Monstra diabolica colebant, Ægyptiaca uuuc numero vincentia.'--Gildas.

[77] Non crederem scripturae nisi me ecclesiae moveret auctoritas.'--Aug.

[78] Erubescit quamvis praeclara doctrina quam propria reprehendit conscientia.'--Hieron. in Epitaph. Marcellae.

[79] Quid ergo malum in Christiana religione, cujus reus gaudet, accusatio votum est, et poena felicitas.'--Tertul.

[80] Pelagiani omnes nascimur et cum supercilio pharisaico.'--Spanheim.

[81] Potius ruat coelum quam pereat una mica veritatis.'--Luther.

[82] Ne forte cum transisset tempus quo eum credebant esse venturum, et venisse non cernerent, etiam caetera fallaciter sibi promitti arbitrantes et de ipsa mercede fidei desperarent.'

[83] Homoou'sios and omoiou'sios.

[84] Theodo'chos and theoto'kos.

[85] As Rivet said of Montague, Non potest ille quenquam a quo dissentit vel in levissimis sine convitiis nominare.'--Riveti Apol. pro Sanctissima Virgine Maria.

[86] There are divers other fundamentals of the highest nature, as the mystery of the Trinity, into which we are baptized, the union of the two natures in the person of Christ, that the scriptures are the word of God, &c.

[87] Ipsae foeminae sunt nobiscum in eadem confessionis gloria constitutae.'--Cyp. Mart. Cum triumphantibus viris et foeminae veniunt, quae cum saeculo dimicantes sexum quoque vicerunt.'--Cyp. Serm. de Lapsis.

[88] Efficacius eat vitae quam linguae testimonium.'--Bernard.

[89] Gladiatores perfectissimos non tantum magistri et praepositi sui, sed etiam idiotae et supervacui quique adhortantur de longinquo, ut saepe ab ipso populo dictata suggesta profuerint.'--Tertul ad Mart.

[90] To` peri` theion epime'leia,' &c.--Arist. Polit., lib. vii. cap. 8.

[91] Alternis vicibus contentioso fune uterque diem in vesperam

traximus, obstrepentibus etiam quibusdam spectantibus, singulorum nubilo quodam veritatis obumbrabatur.'--Tertul. contra Judaeos.

Ver. 4. For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of

old ordained to this condemnation; ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Jude having made way into their affections by a salutation, which, according to the wont of the apostles, breatheth out spiritual and heavenly wishes for their good, he doth in the third verse exhort and engage them to a constant defence of the truth; and now the necessity or occasion of such an exhortation is declared, namely, because false teachers were got abroad, and had slyly taken up the general name and profession of Christians; therefore in faithfulness he could not choose but warn them of the danger.

The whole epistle is spent in the description of heretics, their sins and punishments. In this verse they are described by four things:--(1.) By their entrance into the church, certain men crept in unawares. (2.) By their condition before God, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation. (3.) By the disposition of their spirits, ungodly men. (4.) By the course of their doctrines and conversations; where two things are charged upon them:--(1st.) Abusing the gospel, turning the grace of our Lord into lasciviousness. (2d.) Denying Jesus Christ in his nature and offices, denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

First, Let us begin with the description of their entrance into the church, there are certain men crept in unawares. Some say they are not named, as not being worthy, or rather, it not being necessary, they being so plainly described; and indeed it is usual with apostles, who

rather dealt against things than persons, to suppress the name, and describe the error or sin. But what is the meaning of this first thing laid to their charge, they crept in unawares'? I answer:--

1. It may imply their entrance into the church under a colour and show of profession. Wicked men may creep into the best church; God permitteth it not only for their own hardening, but for our trouble and trial. Paul complaineth of false brethren privily brought in to spy out their liberty,' Gal. ii. 4; and the adversaries of Jerusalem, said, Ezra iv. 1, Let us build with you, for we seek your God as ye do;' but it was with an intent to hinder the work: so Simon Magus got to be baptized, Acts viii., as thieves seek to be entertained in the house, that they may have the more opportunity to work mischief whilst the good-man is asleep. Learn hence to be more watchful in admissions to the church: no perils so great as those occasioned by false brethren. We think to fill the church, but we do but fill the house with thieves: wicked men ever prove a trouble. It is an easy matter to fill the church by remitting the rigour and severity of discipline; but heaven is never the fuller, but the emptier, for wicked men are hardened and confirmed in their own security; and the church never fareth the better, [92] it loseth in strength what it gets in breadth, as a river doth, and zeal is lessened the more the number is increased: yea, wicked men usually prove a trouble, and we come to wish afterward we had been more strict. It is said, Acts v. 13, 14, Of the rest durst no man join himself unto them, but the people magnified them, and believers were the more added unto the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.' It is spoken upon the occasion of the sudden death of Ananias and Sapphira; it terrified the hypocrites, but brought in more sound believers; for of the rest durst no man join,' that is, of such as Ananias and Sapphira were, believers in show, but carnal in heart; they

saw it was not dallying with God in such matters. Just so when the church keep a strait hand, hypocrites dare not join, but sound believers will the sooner, and then the church, though it be a lesser body, it is more sound, healthy, and active. But what rule must we go by? we must go by outward and general profession. I answer--This place will give us some direction. As far as we can discern men, so far may we judge of them; for the entrance of these men is here declared to be clancular and surreptitious: if the church had known them, or looked to them so warily as it should, the mischief had been prevented. Bellarmine [93] himself confesseth, that the intention of the church is only to gather believers into a body, and if it knew the wicked and unbelieving, it would either not admit them, or being admitted by chance, it would cast them out. It is good to be strict, lest by promiscuous admissions we bring in such a mischief to the church as we cannot easily get rid of.

2. It may note their intrusion or invasion of the office of preaching; presuming without a warrant, or coming into the fold not by the door, in the regular established way, false teachers usually running unsent; it is often charged upon them in the scriptures: none so prone to errors as those that have a defect in their calling. Christ, when he prayeth for a blessing on the apostles' labours, he useth that as an argument, John xvii. 18, I have sent them into the world.' They that are loath to submit their gifts to public approbation draw a just suspicion upon themselves. How came they to you? did they creep in? or were they solemnly admitted? When elements are out of their place they breed confusion. When men are out of their place they are not a blessing but a mischief to the church.

3. The two former senses may be allowed, but I rather prefer a third; their creeping into the people's hearts and affections by plausible

pretences and insinuations, instilling their errors drop by drop before they could be observed, and pretending themselves to be friends of truth and piety. I do prefer this sense, partly because he saith only crept in, without mentioning either church or office; but chiefly because this epistle is but the abridgment of the second epistle of Peter, as will easily appear to those that do compare them. Now, there it is said, 2 Peter ii. 1, They shall privily bring in damnable heresies, denying the Lord that bought them.' From this sense observe--That false teachers use to varnish over and mask the face of error with plausible pretences, that unawares we may take it into our bosoms. The apostle speaketh of their sleights and cunning craftiness,' Eph. iv. 14. Their sleights and pretences are many; I shall touch upon a few. (1.) Sometimes greater strictness: Col. ii. 18, Which things have a show of wisdom, and neglect of the body;' rigorous observances and outward mortifications, as the Papists do. (2.) Special meekness: Ravening wolves in sheep's clothing,' Mat. vii. 15, as if they were all for love and kindness. [94] Absalom stole away the people's hearts by this artifice, 2 Sam. xv. 2. (3.) Higher gospel strains; therefore doth Paul speak so much against the other gospel,' Gal. i. 3, and the other Jesus,' 2 Cor. xi. 4, namely, such a one as they had set up. (4.) Self-denial; as some false teachers at Corinth would take no maintenance to disgrace Paul, see 2 Cor. xi. 12, &c.; this was their glorying, that they would preach freely; and whereas they contributed to the relief of Paul, to them it needed not. (5.) Greater learning, and notions of a newer and more sublime strain: Oppositions of science falsely so called,' 1 Tim. vi. 20, Platonic speculations, un grounded subtleties. (6.) Greater favour and liberty to nature: They promise liberty, and allure through the lusts of the flesh,' 2 Peter ii. 18, representing the faithful ministers of Christ as envying the

contentment of your natures, and burdening you with exactions too rigorous; therefore the apostle saith, I am afraid lest any through subtlety beguile you, as the devil did Eve,' 2 Cor. xi. 3. How was that? I answer--By insinuating a kind of envy in God, as if he did begrudge them the perfection and freedom of their natures: Gen. iii. 5, God knoweth that your eyes shall be opened,' &c. So they think others are too strict, and lay too many restraints upon your carnal desires, and by this means allure many loose and unstable souls. (7.) Many times pretending the defence of that truth which they secretly impugn; as Pelagius talked altogether of grace, and Faustus Rhegiensis, pretending to oppose the Pelagians, did but more covertly own their cause. [95] Uses of this point are divers. (1.) For information; it showeth us the reason why we cannot set down the precise beginning of errors, because they are privily brought in. Mystery is written in the whore's forehead, Rev. xvii. 5; the leak is not espied many times, though the ship be ready to sink. The originals of heresy are like the fountain of Nile, obscure and hidden; a man may lose himself in the labyrinth of antiquity before he can find them out. The Roman apostasy is a mystery of iniquity, that stole into the church disguised and by degrees, [96] so that the beginning of it is not so easily stated as of other heresies that are full grown at their first appearance. (2.) It informeth us of the odiousness of error; it dareth not appear in its own colours, nor be seen in its own face; therefore Satan, when he would set any error on foot, he maketh choice of the most subtle instruments, that they may put a varnish upon it; as when he tempted Eve, he made use of the serpent, the most subtle of all the beasts of the field,' Gen. iii. 1, whereas the Lord chooseth the plainest instruments, and hath commanded them to use all simplicity and godly sincerity,' 2 Cor. i. 12, for truth is so lovely in itself, that it

needeth no borrowed colours. (3.) It informeth us what reason those that are over you in the Lord have to press you to caution; excuse their holy jealousy,' 2 Cor. xi. 2, all is but need. We must bark when we see a wolf, though in a sheep's garment; our silence and negligence doth but give them an advantage: Whilst the husbandman slept, the enemy came and sowed tares,' Mat. xiii. 25. (4.) It presseth you to skill and watchfulness; you had need be sound in the faith, that you may discern between good and evil, yea, to have your senses exercised,' Heb. v. 15. A soft credulity is soon abused: Prov. xiv. 15, The simple believeth every word.' There is no reason but knowledge should cost us pains as well as gracious conversation. It is a matter of great skill to be a thorough Christian; there is a great deal of sophistry and cunning about. If you follow the cry, you are in danger of engaging in a confederacy against God; if you stick to received customs, there may be error there too. If you run after every novelist on the other hand, you will soon be led into the bogs of error and profaneness; therefore go to him for direction that hath the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. But you need not only skill, but care and watchfulness. It is not good to drink too freely of suspected fountains; let not your affections surprise your judgment; we admire the persons, the gifts, and so easily swallow the doctrine: Try the spirits,' 1 John iv. 1; 1 Thes. v. 21. When there is counterfeit gold abroad, we use the touchstone. Truth loseth nothing by being tried, and you lose nothing, for then your affections are better grounded: Prove all things.' No man is infallible; an implicit faith begets but a fond affection.

Secondly, These seducers are described by their condition before God, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, palai, of old, that is, from all eternity, for so the matter here spoken of imports; progegrammenoi, we translate it before ordained, but the word

signifieth written as in a book; it is usual in scripture to compare God's decrees to a book; as Christ, alleging God's decree for his mission into the world, saith, Ps. xl. 8, In the volume of thy book it is written of me.' The meaning of the metaphor is to show that these decrees are as certain and determinate as if he had a book wherein to write them. Now, these are said to be written before of old,' to show, that though they crept in unawares as to the church, yet not as to God; they fell under the notice of his decrees before ever they acted in this evil way. It is further added, that they were ordained or written down in God's book, eis krima, for judgment' or condemnation;' the word is in different to either sense, for krima is often put for katakrima; thus it is to be taken here for condemnation, appeareth by that place of Peter, haireseis tes apoleias, damnable heresies,' 2 Peter ii. 1, and ver. 3, Whose damnation of a long time slumbereth not;' as he saith here, of old ordained to this judgment.' The meaning of the whole is, that they were such as were left to themselves, to bring upon themselves by their own sins and errors a just condemnation.

Obs. 1. That the object of the divine decrees are not only men's ways, but men's persons. He doth not only say that their condemnation was pre-ordained, but they also were ordained of old to this condemnation. I observe this, because many say that God's decrees do only respect actions and the events; we see they respect persons also; we have no cause to mince matters when the scriptures speak up to the point so fully and roundly.

Obs. 2. Again, from that ordained, or forewritten, observe, God hath his books and registers, wherein the persons, behaviours, and eternal estates of all men are recorded. At the day of judgment these books shall be opened, Rev. xx. 12. Therefore it should be our care to be able to read that our names are written in the book of life,' than

which there cannot be a greater privilege, Luke x. 20. And it presseth caution; all that we do standeth upon record: our speeches, Mal. iii. 16, 17; our thoughts, 1 Cor. iv. 5; our actions, Jer. xvii. 1.

Obs. 3. Again observe, that in all those things which appertain to the judgment of sinners, God doth nothing rashly, but proceedeth by foresight and pre-ordination.

Obs. 4. Again, no man ever perverted the truths of God but to his own loss. They were ordained to this judgment, that is, that by their sins they should come to such a ruin. We play with opinions, but do not consider that damnation is the end of them; the way of truth is the way of life, but error tendeth to death.

These things might be observed, but I shall rather pitch upon two points: one particular, and restrained to the scope of the context; the other general, as being taken from the consideration of the expressions in their full latitude. The first is:--

Obs. 5. That heresies and errors do not fall out by chance, but according to the certain pre-ordination and foreknowledge of God. There are two reasons for it:--Nothing can come to pass without his will, and nothing can come to pass against his will. (1.) Not without his will. If a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without our heavenly Father, Mat. x. 29, that is, cannot be taken and slain without the will of God, then certainly nothing can be imagined which God did not foresee, or which he could not have hindered. There is nothing so small but the Lord taketh cognisance of it; nothing so evil but he turneth it to good. Exempt anything from providence, and you weaken that respect which is due from the creatures to God. If Satan may do what he will, and God only be a looker-on, then the devil-worship of the heathens would seem more rational; it was their custom first to appease the angry gods, lest they should hurt them, and then to invoke the

propitious. Upon this doctrine we might fear the devil and carnal men, though God be propitious; for many things are done whether he will or no. (2.) Not against his will; for then God should make a creature too hard for himself. Things may be against his revealed will, for that is a rule to try the creatures; but not against his secret will, for that would make God impotent and weak. Things that are most against his revealed will yet fall under the ordination of his secret will; and whilst men break commandments they fulfil decrees. His revealed will showeth what should be done, his secret will what will be done. Briefly, the concurrence of God in and about the errors of men may be conceived in these things:--(1st.) He denieth grace and light, which might direct and sanctify; he is debtor to no man, and may do with his own according to his good pleasure, Mat. xx. 15. He is not bound to give grace to all, and therefore it is no prejudice to his goodness to pass by some. (2d.) He leaveth difficulty enough in the word, that men who will not be satisfied may be hardened: Mark iv. 11, 12, All these things are spoken in parables, that seeing they might see and not perceive;' that is, for a punishment of their wilful blindness and hardness. Corrupt nature stumbles in God's plainest ways; the word is clear enough to them that have a mind to understand it, and yet difficult enough to them that have a mind to harden themselves into a prejudice. Non periclitor dicere (saith Tertullian), ipsas scripturas ita dispositas esse, ut materiam subministrarent hereticis. So the Lord himself saith, Jer. vi. 21, Behold I will lay stumbling-blocks before this people;' that is, suffer them to stumble at their own prejudices. (3d.) God leaveth them to follow the course of their own hearts; he doth not incline and compel their wills, or infuse evil to them, only suffereth them to follow the carnal bent and corrupt ambition of their own hearts: Hosea iv. 17, Let him alone;' 1 Kings xxii. 22, Go forth

and do so;' Ps. lxxxi. 12, I gave them up to their own counsels;' he hindereth not their wickedness; yea, permitteth it, that so his wise counsels may take place. (4th.) God ordereth it for good, thereby bringing great advantage to his own name: Exod. ix. 16, For this cause have I raised thee up, to show in thee my power;' great shakings and tumults discover much of God to the world; the devil picketh out the most polished shafts in all the quiver of mankind; and yet still the Lord maintaineth the lot of his inheritance. Yea, God doth not only advance his name, and discover the glory of his providence, in protecting the church, notwithstanding Satan's factors, and the abettors of his cause and kingdom, but also causes the truths that are questioned to shine the more brightly, as being more strongly vindicated and asserted, as a torch shineth the brighter when it is waved with the wind. Such times put men the more upon the study and love of truth, doctrines not being taken up upon trust, but sound conviction; besides error being permitted manifests the approved,' 1 Cor. xi. 19, as a quick smart wind separateth the solid grain from the chaff; and it is a means to engage our dependence upon God for knowledge and instruction. Christ's prophetical office would lie idle and useless were not the chains of consent sometimes broken, and the language divided, some saying one thing, some another, as the difference between the Jews and the Samaritans about the place of worship maketh the woman to go to Christ for satisfaction, John iv. 20. Once more, God's permission of error conduceth to the just ruin of his enemies: Offences must be, but woe be to that man by whom they come,' Mat. xviii. 6, 7. So 1 Sam. ii. 25, Eli's sons would not hearken to the voice of their father, because the Lord had a mind to slay them.' By their own voluntary sins God bringeth them to their just ruin and condemnation. God lets them alone to wanton and play away their own

salvation; if they will turn seekers, familists, ranters, atheists, let them alone.

Uses. The point may be applied many ways. (1.) Here is comfort to those that regard the affairs of Sion; all the confusion and troubles that are in the church are ordered by a wise God; he will bring some good issue out of them, some glory to his name, wherein the saints rejoice as much as in their own welfare; some good to the church. Observe, hast not thou been more confirmed in the truth? engaged to a more frequent recourse to Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge? Hast thou not seen more of God's providence displayed by these tumults? &c. (2.) It checketh fear; it is all in the hands of a good God; as God trieth you to see what you will do, so you must wait upon God to see what he will do: let him alone; in and by all he will bring forth his work in due time. (3.) It showeth their wickedness that take occasion to turn atheists from the multitude of errors. When the church is rent into so many factions, men fool it, as if there were no God, and the whole gospel were but an imposture and well-devised fable; that is the reason why Christ prayeth, John xvii. 21, Let them be perfect in one, that the world may know that thou hast sent me,' i.e., that they might not suspect me for an impostor. Usually we find that thoughts of atheism are wont to haunt us upon these occasions; but there is little reason for it, for all these things are foreknown by God, foretold by God: they must be,' 1 Cor. xi. 19; Mat. xxiv. 6. And never is there so much of God and of the beauty of truth discovered as when errors abound; so that if there were not errors there would be more cause of suspicion; where all things run with a smooth and full consent, and were never questioned, then the strength and worth of them is not tried. But the words of the Lord are pure words, as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times: thou shalt keep them, O

Lord, thou shalt preserve them from this generation,' Ps. xii. 6, 7.
(4.) It is a ground of prayer in times of delusion: Lord, this was ordained by thee in wisdom, let us discern thy glory in it and by it more and more. The church argueth that there was not only Pilate's malice and Herod's malice, but God's hand and counsel,' in the crucifixion of Christ: Acts iv. 28, To do whatsoever thy hand and counsel determined be fore to be done: Lord, we know there is thy counsel in it, and thy counsel still tendeth to good, &c. God loveth to be owned in every providence, and to be entreated to fulfil his own decrees. (5.) It informeth us what a foolish madness it is to think that God seeth not the sin which we secretly commit: surely he seeth it, for he foresaw it before it was committed; yea, from all eternity.
Obs. 6. So much for the first point, the next is, That from all eternity some were decreed by their sins to come unto judgment or condemnation. Because this is one of the texts which divines bring to prove the general doctrine of reprobation, I shall here take occasion--(1.) To open this doctrine; (2.) To prove it; (3.) To vindicate it; (4.) To apply it. In the first, you will understand the nature; in the second, the reasons; in the third, the righteousness; in the fourth, the profit, of this decree.
1. I shall open the nature of it in several propositions. (1.) It is an eternal decree. God's internal acts are the same with his essence, and therefore before all time, as believers are elected before all worlds,' Eph. i. 4. So are sinners reprobated; they are both in time and order before ever the creature was: Rom. ix. 11, Before the children had done either good or evil, it was said, Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated.' Election and reprobation are not a thing of yesterday, and subsequent to the acts of the creature, but from all eternity. (2.) There is a decree and pre-ordination, not only a naked foresight of

those that perish. Some Lutherans say that predestination is proper only to the elect; but as to the reprobate, there is only a prescience or naked foreknowledge: no pre-ordination, lest they should make God the author of the creatures' sin and ruin. But these men fear where no fear is; the scriptures show that the greatest evil that ever was did not only fall under the foreknowledge, but determinate counsel of God,' Acts ii. 23; it was not only foreknown, but unchangeably ordained and determined. (3.) This decree of God is founded in his own good-will and pleasure; for there being nothing higher and greater than God, it is a great error to suppose a cause of his will, either be fore it, above it, or without it. God's actions do all begin in himself, and his will is the supreme reason: Mat. xi. 26, Even so, Father; because it seemed good in thy sight.' Jesus Christ would give no other reason why the gospel was hidden from the wise and prudent, and revealed unto babes.' We are often disputing why, of two men that are equal in misery, the one should be taken, the other left; why the Lord will show mercy to some that are no less unworthy than others; but when we have all done, we must merely rest in the will and good pleasure of God: Even so, Father,' &c.; see Rom. ix. 18, He hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth;' it is not from the foresight of our wills receiving or rejecting grace proposed, for then man's will would be made a superior cause to an act in God. (4.) In this matter of reprobation, preterition and pre-damnation must be carefully distinguished. Look, as in election, God hath decreed to bestow first grace and then glory; to to the decree of giving grace preterition is opposed, to the decree of giving glory, ordination unto judgment. Now God's preterition or passing by is merely and barely from the good pleasure of God. But pre-damnation presupposeth consideration of the creatures' sin; both these parts of the decree are clearly set down in

the word--preterition, or passing by: Rev. xvii. 8, Whose names were not written in the book of life, from the foundation of the world;' so again Rev. xiii. 8. In other places you have pre-damnation expressed, as 1 Thes. v. 9, appointed unto wrath,' and here, ordained to this judgment,' (5.) Those who are passed by, or not written in God's book, never attain to saving grace; it is not given to them: Mat. xiii. 11, To you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom, but to them it is not given.' Yea, it is said to be hidden from them:' Mat. xi. 25; they may have common gifts, or be under such a common work of the Spirit as leaveth them without excuse; but because the Lord hath passed them by, effectual grace is not given to them, without which they cannot believe and be saved: John x. 26, Ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep;' that is, not elected of my Father. Saving grace runneth in the channel of election; so Acts xiii. 48, As many as were ordained to eternal life believed.' God's special gifts are dispensed according to his decrees. (6.) Men being left of God, and destitute of saving grace, freely and of their own accord fall into such sins as render them obnoxious to the just wrath and vengeance of God: Rom. xi. 7 The election hath obtained, and the rest were hardened;' freely and of their own accord they turned all things to their own judgment and ruin: so Rev. xiii. 8, The dwellers on earth did worship the whore, whose names were not written in the book of life;' that is, they turned aside to antichristian defilements and pollutions. (7.) God's decree concerning such persons is immutable; it is not rescinded and disannulled, but is fully executed and accomplished in the damnation of the sinner. The Lord's counsels are all unchangeable, both as to election, 2 Tim. ii. 19; Heb. vi. 17, and as to reprobation; no reprobate can be an elect person, nor an elect person a reprobate: Job xii. 14, He shutteth up a man, and there can be no opening;' and Job

xxiii. 13, He is in one mind, who can turn him?' In God's books there is no putting in and crossing out of names; but as the number of the elect is definite and certain, they cannot be more, and they cannot be less; so also of the reprobate. (8.) This eternal, irrevocable purpose of God of leaving sinners to themselves, that by their sins they may come to judgment, is for God's glory: Rom. ix. 22, What if God, willing to show his wrath and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels fitted to destruction?' All God's decrees, works, providences, tend to the further discovery of himself in the eye of the creatures.

2. Let me prove that there is such a decree by scripture, for reason here hath no place. Take here three that are most full: the first is 1 Thes. v. 9, God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by Jesus Christ,' which plainly implieth that some are appointed unto wrath. The second is 1 Peter ii. 8, where the apostle speaketh of some that were disobedient and refused Christ, whereunto also they were appointed.' The third place is Prov. xvi. 4, God made all things for himself, and the wicked for the day of evil.' The drift of that place is to show that both creation and predestination were for God's glory, and he instanceth in that part of predestination which concerneth the wicked, because it is hardest to be digested and believed.

But now for the reasons why God hath chosen some, and appointed others by sin to come unto judgment. I can only tell you that God's judgments are past finding out.' Rom. xi. 33. We must admire, we cannot search them to the bottom. So far as God hath revealed his will we may clearly judge that it is for the discovery of his justice and mercy, neither of which could have been discovered to the world with that advantage, had it not been for this double decree of God, to save some and leave others to their own ruin. If grace were given to all, how should the

world know that God were free? Again, if all were pardoned, how should the world know that God were just? In election, God discovereth the freeness of his grace, Eph. i. 6. It is love that we enjoy grace, elective love that we enjoy it alone. In reprobation God discovereth his sovereignty, and by it the severity of his justice and power of his wrath, Rom. ix. 22. In choosing one and leaving another, there God discovereth his liberty, and that he doth not act out of servile necessity; and his severity in the eternal pains of them that perish in their sins.

3. Let me vindicate this doctrine, which in the eyes of some seemeth to blemish the justice of God, to infringe the comfort of man, yea, to abolish the duty of man; therefore it needeth a little clearing. Reason cannot easily digest this strong meat, partly because we are apt to reprehend what we cannot comprehend; partly because this doctrine checketh carnal ease and security, which is usually fed with a general hope and presumption that the God that made us will save us, that he will not damn his creatures, but is merciful to all, &c.; now this awakeneth us, when we hear that grace floweth in a narrower channel; partly because aspiring man is loath to submit to this absolute lord ship and sovereignty of God, that he should dispose of his creatures according to his own pleasure: our ambition is to be autexou'sioi, lords of ourselves. Man, that would be as God, taketh it ill to be as a beast made to be taken and destroyed.' Upon all these prejudices man is loath to receive this doctrine, therefore it needeth to be cleared.

[1.] In regard of God, that you may not pollute and stain his excellency with impure and prejudicial thoughts. You will say, Is God just, that only upon his will and pleasure ordaineth his creatures to condemnation? Have not the reprobate cause to complain, if he hath passed a decree upon which their condemnation doth infallibly follow? I

answer--(1.) Our understandings are not the measure of God's justice, but his own will. Things may be just, though the reasons of them do not appear to us: human reason groweth giddy by peeping into the deep of God's decrees; our work is not to dispute, but wonder. God's freedom is a riddle to reason, because though we will not be bound to laws, yet we are willing God should be bound. God's actions must not be measured by any external rule; things are good because God willeth them, for his will is justice itself. (2.) The electing of some and passing by of others is not an act of justice, but dominion; for he doth not act here as a judge, but as a lord; it is a matter of favour, not of right and wrong. Condemnation of a man for sin, or punishing a man for sin, is an act of justice; but to have mercy, or not to have mercy, that dependeth merely upon God's will, otherwise it would follow that God were a debtor unto man. Justice supposeth debt, or something due; no wrong is done them in not giving grace: the elect can speak of undeserved grace, and the reprobate of deserved punishment. When we are not bound to do good, if we act according to pleasure there is no injury, as in invitations, preferments, and all acts of favour. We cannot endure that a right should be challenged. The good-man in the parable pleaded, I may do with mine own as it pleaseth me,' Mat. xx. 15. The Lord may justly challenge grace as his own, and therefore leave him to his pleasure in the distribution, for he is bound to none. (3.) God's not giving grace to the reprobate is not their sin, but their misery; preterition made them miserable, but not sinful: it doth not infer a coaction and compulsion to sin; sin followeth upon it not as an effect, but a consequent; as upon the absence of the sun darkness doth necessarily follow, and yet the sun is not the cause of darkness. In grace God purposeth, God worketh; in sin God ordereth the sin, and maketh use of it to the glory of his justice. But man sinneth freely:

the water, while it runneth its own course, serveth the end of the lord of the soil, in driving mills, and bringing fish into his ponds, and overflowing his meadows, &c. So God causeth not sin in any, only permitteth it and endureth it, and serveth his righteous ends of it: Rom. ix. 22, He endureth with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted for destruction.' He prepareth the vessels of mercy, as the apostle there expresseth, but endureth the vessels of wrath while they fit themselves for ruin. (4.) Sin is the cause of punishment, though God's will is the cause why they are passed by. They are not punished because not elected, but because not obedient: Wherefore doth a living man complain but for his sins?' Lam. iii. 39. It is here as it was in that case. David gave order to Solomon that Joab and Shimei should not die in peace,' 1 Kings ii. 6-9. Yet David's order was no cause of Joab's death, but his own treason, nor of Shimei's death, but his own flight. God never damneth the creature, or decreeth to damn it, without respect of sin. God's will is the cause of preterition, his justice is the cause of pre-damnation, for damnation is an act of punitive justice. God is so just that he doth not condemn any but for sin; so gracious, that he doth not condemn every man that doth sin. (5.) The formal and proper end of God in reprobation is not the eternal destruction of the creature, but the discovery of his own justice or glory, promoted or shining forth in and by that destruction. In election God desireth and effecteth the salvation of a sinner in a subordination to his own glory; but in preterition, God endureth a sinner with much long-suffering, till, by his own destruction, he bringeth to him the glory of his justice: Ezek. xxiii. 11, As I live, saith the Lord, I desire not the death of a sinner;' so Ezek. xviii. 32, Have I any pleasure at all, that the wicked should die;' the meaning is, God doth not will these things with such a will as is

terminated in the destruction of the creature, but only ordereth them in a subordination to his own glory; or, in plainer terms, God delighteth not in the destruction of a sinner, as it is the destruction of the creature, but as it is the execution of justice. In the execution of a malefactor there is a difference between punishment and destruction; his punishment is of the judge, his destruction is of himself; so in this case, Thy destruction is of thyself, O Israel,' Hosea xiii. 9.

[2.] Concerning the second objection, whether it doth not infringe our comfort, and discourage men from looking after their salvation? If I am elected, I shall be saved, if I am not elected, I shall be damned: thus many men plead. They say, And how will you stir up the negligent and encourage the distressed, supposing that doctrine which you have laid down?

I answer--(1.) This scruple is but affected, not offered, and therefore should be chidden, and not answered: a questioning God's secret will, when we know his revealed. God's secret will hath relation to his own actions, his revealed will to ours. We must not look to God's will in the depths of his counsel, but his precepts: not what God will do himself, but what he will have us do. God saith, Believe in Christ, and thou shalt be saved;' that is our rule. A physician offereth cure to all that will come; it were a madness to dispute away the opportunity, and say, I do not know whether he intendeth it to me. If men were ready to perish in the deep waters, and a boat should be offered to carry to land as many as would come in it, to be making scruples when we are ready to be drowned, whether this help be intended to us, yea or no, were a very fond thing: in such cases we would not wrangle, but thankfully take hold of what is offered. (2.) This doctrine can be no ground of despair to any, because reprobation is a sealed book; no man

for the present can know his reprobation, nor is to believe himself to be a reprobate, but is called upon to use the means that he may be saved. He is no reprobate that falleth into sin, but he that persevereth in sin unto the end. Therefore it is no good conclusion, I am a sinner, therefore I am a reprobate; it is midnight, therefore it will never be day. This is a book sealed with seven seals; none but the Lamb can open it. (3.) The opposite opinion is encumbered with more difficulties and scruples. What comfort can a man have in universal redemption? A man can not have solid comfort in that which is common to good and bad, to those that shall be damned, and those which shall be saved; all comfort ariseth from a practical syllogism. Now make the practical syllogism according to the principles of universal grace: Christ died for all men; I am a man, therefore for me; where humanity, or being a man, is made the ground of claim and interest; and then, unless with Puccius and Huberus, we hold universal salvation, as well as universal redemption, the argument will yield no comfort. How can I, according to that opinion, comfort myself in the death of Christ, when men may be damned that have an interest in it? (4.) As to the other part of this objection, concerning the profit of this doctrine, and whether it doth not take off men from industry: so some have thought. But I answer--No; for (1st.) God hath enjoined the end and the means together: Except ye [97] abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved,' saith Paul to them that sailed with him: a decree was passed for their safety, that not a man of them should perish; yet they must abide in the ship. God doth infallibly stir up the elect to the use of means, as well as bring to such an end. (2d.) The right use of the doctrine of reprobation is to put us upon examination or diligence; upon examination whether we believe in Christ, or have truly repented, that we may make our calling and election sure,' 2 Peter i. 10, for by this

means is the sealed fountain broken open. Or upon diligence; in case you find no fruits of elective love, pray, read, hear, meditate, wait, work out your salvation, &c. (3d.) The doctrine of election is of great use in the spiritual life; without it we cannot understand the freeness of God's love, which is the great means to quicken us to praise God, and to beget love to God again; for as fire kindleth fire, so doth love beget love. It is God's glory to be served out of love and free consent; the devil ruleth his slaves by a servile awe. Well, then, if love set love awork, and the best sight of God's love be in God's decree, let them say, if they dare, that the doctrine of God's decree is an unprofitable doctrine. Again, nothing taketh off carnal confidence and glorying in ourselves more than God's choice, according to his own pleasure; nothing is a greater support in afflictions, especially in distresses of conscience. In short, nothing is such a firm bond of love between believers as the consideration that they are all predestinated from all eternity to the everlasting enjoyment of the same inheritance; those obligations which last only for this world cannot be so firm a tie.

[3.] The next objection is, How can God call upon them to believe whom he hath passed by in the counsels of his will, and intendeth never to give them grace, without which they cannot believe? I answer--God may require men to believe, though he never intended to give them faith; for there is a great deal of difference between his decree and his law: his law showeth what must be, his decree what shall be. God never said all shall believe, but he hath said the contrary, 2 Thes. iii. 2; but all must believe; that he hath said again and again. The gospel doth not signify this or that man shall be saved; but whosoever believeth shall be saved.' As truly as it can be said to John or Thomas, or any elect person, If you do not believe you shall be damned, so surely may

it be said to a reprobate, to Judas, or any other, If you believe you shall be saved. If the reprobate have a like favour with the elect in the general offer of grace, they are left without excuse, the tender being so great, and so far the same unto both; though the elect's receiving be the effect of special grace, yet the reprobate's rejecting is without excuse, he voluntarily turning back upon his own mercies. So much briefly for the vindication of this doctrine.

4. Let me now apply it.

[1.] Let the elect so much the more admire God's love to them, because that some are passed by; your mercies are not every one's mercies. God's aim herein was to commend his mercy to the vessels of mercy.' Rom. ix. 23. If he had passed us by, we could not have blamed his love; if he had punished us eternally, we could not have blamed his justice. Consider God hath as much interest in them as in you: All souls are mine, saith the Lord,' Ezek. xviii. 4; he was their creator as well as yours, and we are all in our blood, involved in the same condemnation;' he saw as much of original sin in you as in them; we lay in the same polluted mass. Oh! that free grace should make such a difference. He had as much reason to choose Judas and Simon Magus as you: Was not Esau Jacob's brother?' Mal. i. 2, in all points alike, but only in God's choice. When men choose it is for worth. Who would choose crooked timber to make vessels of honour? Yet thus doth the Lord single out the worst and most depraved natures, to form them into a people for himself. How sensibly many times did God make a distinction between you and others in the same ordinance: One is taken and another left,' and one is taken to grace, and another left to perish in His own ways; others, it may be, were hardened by the same sermon by which you were converted. Oh! how ravishing is the sight of God's love in election, and the distinct courses of his providence.

[2.] To press us to diligence to make our election sure, that we may be out of the fear of being in the number of reprobates. The great question that concerneth the comfort of thy soul is whether thou be ordained to eternal life or no? Now, if thou beest negligent and careless, and refusest to use the means of salvation, the case is decided, though little to thy comfort: Thou judgest thyself to be un worthy of eternal life,' Acts xiii. 46. A lazy, carnal, careless man doth but provide matter of despair for himself. There are some steps to the accomplishment of the decree of reprobation; as sottish obstinacy against the counsels of the word, a being given up to the spirit of error, a constant neglect of means, a hardening of ourselves in the abuse of grace, &c.; all these are black marks. A man may recover, but your soul is nigh to death; therefore beware lest thou be found one of them who by sin are ordained to come to judgment. Eli's sons hearkened not to the counsel of their father, because the Lord had a mind to slay them.

Thirdly, We are now come to that part of the description, ungodly men, asebeis. The word signifieth without worship, and is sometimes applied to heathens and men that live without the knowledge and worship of the true God; at other times to wicked men, that acknowledge the true God, but walk unsuitably to their knowledge and profession. That we may find out who are these men, let us see what is ungodliness, a sin much spoken of, but little known. The word, as I said, signifieth without worship. Worship is the chiefest and most solemn respect of the creature to God, and therefore it is put for the whole subjection and obedience that we owe to him, and when any part of that service, respect, or honour is denied or withheld, we are guilty of ungodliness. That pagans and men out of the church are signified by the term ungodly, appeareth by 1 Peter iv. 18, If judgment begin at the house of

God, where shall the wicked and ungodly appear?' where the ungodly are plainly opposed to the house of God. Again, the unjustified estate is expressed by ungodliness; as the apostle, when he speaketh of the justifying of Abraham and David, he gave the Lord this title, Rom. iv. 5, God that justifieth the ungodly;' and so Christ is said to die for the ungodly.' Rom. v. 6. The reason of which expression is, because the people of the Jews were divided into three ranks or sorts: there were of oi' asebeis, the ungodly; of oi' di'kaioi, the just; and oi' a'gathoi, the good; or, to keep their own terms, there were reshagnim, the wicked or violent; and tsidikim, the just; and chasidim the good, or the bountiful. Now, saith the apostle, scarcely for a righteous man would one die;' that is, for a man of a rigid innocency; but for the good man,' that is, the bountiful, the useful, a man would even dare to die;' but Christ died for us when we were reshagnim, sinners, enemies, &c. Again, more especially, ungodliness implieth the transgression of the first table; as Rom. i. 18, where all sin is distinguished into ase'beian, ungodliness, and adiki'an, unrighteousness, ungodliness in respect of duty to God, and unrighteousness in respect of the duty to men; and also where sin is distinguished into ungodliness and worldly lusts,' Titus ii. 12. So that it chiefly signifieth that part of sin whereby we rob God of his honour, respect, and service, established by the first table, and it may be described to be a not giving God his right or due honour.

To clear it further, let me tell you that there are four notions, which are the ground of all religion. (1.) That God is, and is one. (2.) That God is. none of those things that are seen, but something more excellent. (3.) That God hath a care of human affairs, and judgeth with equity. (4.) That the same God is maker of all things without himself. And to these four notions or principles are suited the four precepts of

the first table. In the first we have God's unity; in the second, God's invisible nature, and therefore images are forbidden upon that ground, Deut. iv. 12; in the third, the knowledge of human affairs, even of men's thoughts, and that is the foundation of an oath; for the third commandment doth principally forbid perjury, and in an oath God is invoked as a witness, chiefly of the heart, in which his omnisciency is acknowledged, and appealed to as a judge and avenger, in which his justice and power is acknowledged. The next principle, that God is creator and governor of all things, is established by the fourth commandment; for the Sabbath at first was instituted for that purpose, to keep up the memorial of the creation in the world. Now, out of these speculative notions practical flow of their own accord, &c., that God is alone to be worshipped, obeyed, honoured, trusted; and as far as we set up other confidences, or are ignorant of his excellency, or deny God his worship and service, or serve him after an unworthy manner, superstitiously, carelessly, hypocritically, or have gross opinions of his essence, or exclude the dominion of his providence, or cease to invocate his name, so far we are guilty of ungodliness.

More distinctly and closely yet, let me note that God is to be acknowledged as--(1.) The first cause; (2.) The chiefest good; (3.) As the supreme truth and authority; (4.) As the last end. God is to be honoured as the first cause, that giveth being to all things, and hath his being from none; and so if we do not trust in him, or can trust any creature rather than God, our estates rather than God, or do not observe him in his providence, the effects of his mercy, justice, and power, or do not acknowledge his dominion in all events, and sanctify the things which we use by asking his leave and blessing in prayer, we are guilty of ungodliness. Again, God is to be acknowledged as the chiefest good; and therefore, if we do not know him, often think of

him, delight in communion with him, fear to offend him, care to please him, this neglect and contempt of God is ungodliness. Again, God is to be acknowledged as the supreme truth and authority; and therefore, if we are not moved with his promises, threats, counsels, as the Gentiles were moved with the oracles of their gods, as God's people of old, when that dispensation was in use, with a voice from heaven, and do not submit to him, reverence him in worship, subject our hearts and lives to his laws, it is ungodliness. Once more, God is the last end; and therefore, if in all acts, spiritual, moral, natural, even those of the lightest consequence, we do not aim at God's glory, still it is ungodliness.

In this method I shall endeavour to open this argument. And first, Let us consider God as the first cause, and under that consideration:--

1. Ignorance is a branch of ungodliness. I name it first, because it is the cause of all disorder in worship or conversation. [98] The apostle saith, 3 John 11, He that doth evil hath not seen God,' Right thoughts of God are the fuel which maintaineth the fire of religion, which otherwise would soon decay and be extinguished. Now generally people are ignorant of God; they know him as men born blind do fire; they can tell there is such a thing as fire, because it warmeth them, but what it is they cannot tell. So the whole world and conscience proclaimeth there is a God. The blindest man may see that, but they know little or nothing of his essence, as he hath revealed himself in his word. The Athenians had an altar, and the inscription was To the unknown God; and so do most Christians go on in a track of customary worship, and so worship an idol rather than God. So Christ telleth the Samaritans, John iv. 22, Ye worship ye know not what.' It is usual with men in a dark and blind superstition to conform to the worship of their place, not considering why, or whom it is they worship. Gross ignorance is a sign

of no grace, for God hath no child so little but he knoweth his father: Jer. xxxi. 34, They shall all know me, from the least to the greatest.' Some have better education than others, greater helps and advantages of parts and instruction, but they all have a necessary knowledge of God. Again, gross ignorance is a pledge of future judgment: 2 Thes. i. 7, God will come in flaming fire, to render vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel.' Many poor ignorant creatures are harmless, they do no wrong. Oh! but they know not God, and that is wrong enough; God will avenge it. To be ignorant of God that made them, is a matter of sadder consequence than you are aware. By those that know not God in this place is meant pagans, for it is contradistinct to those that obey not the gospel. But if there be vengeance for pagans, who have no other apostles sent to them but those natural apostles of sun, moon, and stars, and have no other books wherein to study God but showers of rain and fruitful seasons, if there be vengeance for them because they did not see and own a first cause, what is there for those that shut their eyes against the light of the gospel? Surely to be ignorant now is a greater sin than we think of.

2. When we do not depend upon him it is ungodliness. Trust and dependence is the ground of all commerce between us and God, and the greatest homage and respect which we yield to the Creator and first cause. Now when men trust any creature rather than God, their estates rather than God, they rob him of his peculiar honour. That there is such a sin appeareth by that, Job xxxi. 24;' if I had made gold my hope, or said to the fine gold, Thou art my confidence. If I rejoiced because my wealth is great, and my hand had gotten much,' &c. Job, to vindicate himself from hypocrisy, reckoneth up the usual sins of hypocrites; amongst the rest this is one, to make gold our confidence. Men are apt to think it the staff of their lives, and the stay of their

posterity, and so their trust being intercepted, their hearts are diverted from God. It is a usual sin, though little thought of. The great danger of riches is by trusting in them, Mark x. 23, 24. When men are intrenched within an estate, they think they are safe, secured against whatever shall happen, and so God is laid aside. Let a man be intrenched within a promise, and yet he is full of fears and doubts; but wealth breedeth security, therefore covetousness' is called idolatry,' Col. iii. 5, and the covetous man an idolater, Eph. v. 5, not so much because of his love of money as his trust in money. The glutton loveth his belly, and the gratifications of the appetite, Phil. iii. 19, yet he doth not trust in his belly cheer he thinketh not to be protected by it; and, therefore, though he rob God of his love, yet he doth not, as the covetous, rob God of his trust: we are all apt to make such an idol of the creature. Poor men, if they had wealth, this were enough to make them happy, and therefore they trust in those which have it, which is idolatry upon idolatry. Whence it is said, Ps. lxii. 9, Men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree a lie.' To appearance men of low degree are nothing; but men of high degree are wont to be trusted in, and therefore a lie, because by a righteous judgment of God they disappoint our trust. But chiefly is this secret idolatry incident to the rich; though they do not pray to their wealth, or offer sacrifice, but use it as familiarly as any other thing, yet if it intercept their trust they are guilty of idolatry. Many that smile at the vanity of Gentiles, that worshipped stocks and stones, and idols of gold and silver, do worse themselves, though more spiritually, whilst they build their happiness and security upon their estates. It may be they do not say to their riches, Ye shall deliver me, or to their gold, Thou art my confidence. They do not use such gross language; for covetous men may speak as basely of wealth as another

man. They may say, I know it is but refined earth, &c., but their hearts make it their only refuge and stay, and their inward thoughts are that they and their children can not be happy without it, which is a great sin, a setting up another God, for by this means is their heart withdrawn from the true God to the world, and kept from good works, lest they part with that which is the staff and stay of their lives.

3. When we do not observe his providence. The blind world sets up an idol called chance, and doth not acknowledge God at the other end of causes, as swaying all things by his wisdom and power. (1.) In afflictions. They think they come by chance and ill-luck, 1 Sam. vi. 9, and Isa. xxvi. 11; as if instruments and second causes did all, and the Lord were an idle spectator and looker-on, and had no hand in all that befalleth us. Job better, The Lord giveth, the Lord taketh.' He doth not look only to the Chaldean, the Sabean, the thief, but the Lord. In all afflictions we should look beyond the creature, and not complain of ill fortune and chance, or stars, or constellations, or anything on this side God. (2.) In mercies. It is ungodliness when we do not see God in all our mercies. Wicked men receive blessings, and never look up. They live upon God every moment. They have life and breath and motion,' and hourly maintenance from him, and yet God is not in all their thoughts.' As swine raven upon the acorns, and never look up to the oak from whence they fall, so they look no higher than the next hand; but God's children may be compared to chickens, that sip and look upwards. The Lord complaineth of Israel, Hosea ii. 8, She did not know that I gave her corn and wine and oil, and silver and gold.' There cannot be a greater sign of an ungodly spirit than this unthankful profaneness. This is that which God expecteth from reasonable creatures, by way of homage, that we should own him as author of all the good which we enjoy. Other creatures live upon God, but they are

not capable of knowing the first cause as we are. Idolatry and atheism had never crept into the world if men had considered who it was that gave them fruitful seasons and showers of rain, and filled their hearts with food and gladness,' Acts xiv. 16, 17. And surely nothing feedeth piety, and maintaineth a constant awe of God, so much as thinking of God every time we eat and drink and enjoy any new mercy from him. But alas! usually we forget God when he remembereth us most. He is never so much dishonoured as in eating and drinking, and in the plentiful enjoyment of outward comforts.

4. Another part of ungodliness is when we do not acknowledge his dominion over all events, sanctifying the things we use and under take by asking his leave and blessing. It is robbery, to use goods without the owner's leave, so to use any creature, food, or physic without sanctifying it by the word and prayer,' 1 Tim. iv. 3-5; that is, knowing our liberty and right from the word of promise, and asking God's leave and blessing in prayer; or to go about any business or journey, or fixing our abode without inquiring at the oracle; all this is ungodliness. It is our duty still to consult with God: Ye ought to say, If the Lord will,' &c., James iv. 15. It is a piece of religious manners. We forget to bid ourselves good speed when we do not acknowledge the dominion of God in all these cases: Prov. iii. 6, In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.' God's children dare not resolve upon any course till they have first consulted with God.

Secondly, God will be acknowledged as the chiefest good, and so we are guilty of ungodliness:--

1. If we do not often think of him. If we did not want hearts, we cannot want objects to put us in mind of God. ou makra`n, he is not far from every one of us,' Acts xvii. 27. But though God be not far from

us, yet we are far from God. He that is everywhere is seldom found in our hearts. We are not so near to ourselves as God is near to us. Who can keep his breath in his body for a minute if God were not there? He is within us and round about us in the effects of his power and goodness, but we are at too great a distance from him in our mind and affections. How many trifles occupy our minds! But the Lord can seldom find any room there: God is not in all their thoughts,' Ps. x. 4. Yea, when thoughts of God rush into our minds, they are like unwelcome guests--we wish to be rid of them. Wicked men abhor their own thoughts of God, because the more they think of God the more they tremble, as the devils do. Therefore the apostle saith, They like not to retain God in their knowledge.' Rom. i. This is far from the temper of God's children. David saith, Ps. civ. 34, My meditation of him shall be sweet.' It is the spiritual feast and entertainment of a gracious soul to think of God. None deserveth our thoughts more than he, and we cannot put them to better use. He thought of us before the world was, and still great is the multitude of his thoughts to us-ward.' Therefore it is vile ingratitude not to think of him again. When we hate a person we cannot endure to look upon him, and the hatred of the mind is showed by the aversation and turning away of the thoughts.

2. If we do not delight in communion with him, we do not honour him as the chiefest good. Friends love to be often in one another's company, and certainly it is good to draw nigh to God,' to preserve an acquaintance between him and us. He hath appointed his ordinances, the word and prayer, which are as it were a dialogue and interchangeable discourse between God and the creature. In the word he speaketh to us, and in prayer we speak unto him. He conveyeth his mind in the word, and we ask his grace in prayer. In prayer we make the request, and in the word we have God's answer. Well, then, when men neglect public or

private prayer, or opportunities of hearing, they are guilty of ungodliness. So far they break off communion with God, especially if they neglect prayer, which is a duty to be done at all times--a sweet diversion which the soul enjoyeth with God in private, a duty which answereth to the daily sacrifice. Therefore the neglect of prayer is made to be a branch of atheism, Ps. xiv. 3, 4. When men are loath to come into God's presence, out of a love to ease and carnal pleasures, and care not if God and they grow strange, or seldom hear from one another, it is a great evil. Our comfort and peace dependeth much upon frequent access to God. So when family worship, when that is neglected, God is not honoured as the chiefest good: the heathens are described to be the families that call not on God's name,' Jer. x. 25. In many places from one end of the week to the other there is no prayer and worship in the family, and so the house, which should be a church, is made a stye. Not a swine about their houses but is attended morning and evening, and yet they can find no time for the solemn invocation of the name of God. What. are they better than heathens?

3. If we do not fear to offend him. God will be served with every affection. Love is of use in the spiritual life, and so is fear: 2 Cor. vii. 1, Perfecting holiness in the fear of God,' Love sweeteneth duties, and fear maketh us watchful against sin: love is the doing grace, Gal. v. 6, and fear is the conserving grace, Jer. xxxii. 40. We have cause to walk in God's ways, because we are always under his eye. Love is necessary, that we may keep God always in our hearts; and fear, that we may keep him always in our eye: both of them are of great use; but fear we now speak of, which is the true internal root of all obedience and worship, Eccles. xii. 13. When there is such a settled disposition of heart as that we dare not grieve him nor affront him to his face--as Ahasuerus said, Will he force the queen before my

face?'--God is much honoured. But now when we are secure and careless, and forget God, and can sin freely in thought and foully in act without remorse, it is ungodliness. Fear is a grace of continual use: we cannot be always praising God, worshipping God, and employed in acts of special communion with him, yet we must be always fearing God: Be thou in the fear of God all the day long,' Prov. xxiii. 17; and elsewhere, Blessed is he that feareth always,' Prov. xxviii. 14. A man hath done with his devotion in the morning, but he hath not done with God; we should think of him, and remember that his eye is upon us, all the day long: we must rise in the fear of God, walk in the fear of God, trade, eat, drink in the fear of God, Jude 12. Some graces are as the lungs, never out of use and exercise. More especially must fear be active when temptations and corruptions arise; we must argue as Joseph, Gen. xxxix. 9.

4. If we do not care to please him. An ungodly man thinketh of nothing less than pleasing God; he neither careth to know his ways, nor to walk in them; they are willingly ignorant,' 2 Peter iii, 5. They do not search, that they may not practise, and so err not in mind, but heart: We desire not the knowledge of thy ways,' Job xxi. 14. They have not a mind to know that which they have not a mind to do, [99] as those that would sleep shut the curtains to keep out the light. A godly man is always approving what is the will of God, Rom. xii. 2, and Eph. v. 10-17; he practiseth what he knoweth, and is still searching that he may know more, as willing always to be more useful for God. What have I to do more?

Thirdly, God will be acknowledged as the supreme truth and authority, and then, if we are not moved with promises, threats, counsels, as with the the words of the great God, if we do not yield him reverence in his worship, and subject our hearts and lives to his laws, it is

ungodliness.

1. We must receive the counsels of his word with all regard and reverence, for that is to receive it as the word of God,' 1 Thes. ii. 13. Heathens received the oracles of their gods, and were much moved; we can drowsily hear of the great things of salvation, of heaven, and the death of Christ, and the covenant of grace, &c., and are not moved, no more moved than with a fable or dream. If a man should make another an offer of a thousand pounds for a trifle, and he should not accept it. you would not say it was because he prized the trifle more--that is improbable, but because he did not believe the offer; so when God offereth heaven upon such terms as he doth, we do not honour him as the eternal truth, but count him a liar, 1 John v. 10, or else we would not neglect the offer.

2. We must yield him reverence in his worship. God is said, Ps. lxviii. 35, to be terrible in the holy places:' he is not only terrible in the high places of the field, where he executeth his dreadful judgments, or in the depths of the sea, where the wonders of the Lord are seen, but terrible in the holy places, where his ordinances are dispensed, because there his holiness, which is the astonishing attribute, is most seen and remembered. We do not come to him as the supreme Majesty when we do not come with awful apprehensions: God is dreadful there where he is most comfortable: Deut. xxviii. 58, That thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, the Lord thy God.' To have God for our God is the ground of all our comfort and hope, and yet it is a glorious and fearful name. In Mal. i. 14, the Lord urgeth two arguments why we should worship him with reverence; one is, I am a great king, saith the Lord of hosts;' the other is, My name is dreadful among the heathen;' implying in the first, that care less and rude addresses to him are a kind of a lessening his majesty; they do not come to him as a great

king, and do as much as in them lieth go about to persuade the world that he is not the God that he is taken to be, so great, so terrible, and glorious. The next argument is taken from his respect among the heathens, that know him by common providence; they that have but a glimpse of his glory, that know least of his glory, yet know enough to fear him and reverence him. Therefore take heed of serving him in a loose and perfunctory manner; you dishonour God exceedingly else, even then when you come to give honour to him.

3. There must be a willing subjection of our hearts and lives to his laws. It must be a subjection of the heart; God's authority is never more undermined than by a mere form of godliness,' 2 Tim. iii. 5. It is the greatest ungodliness that can be, for you rob the Lord of his dominion over the conscience. Hypocrisy is a practical blasphemy: I know the blasphemy of them,' &c., Rev. ii. 9. The life also must be subject to God, by a conformity to his laws. Men hate God as a lawgiver, they love him as a giver of blessings. It is the disposition of all that they would live at large, and have no God to call them to an account. Thoughts that strike at the being of God, and doctrines of liberty, are welcome to a carnal heart; it is pleasing to think if there were no God, to hear that there is no law; no suggestions are more catching. The life must be conformed to God's laws, for he will be honoured in our conversations, as well as have his throne set up in our consciences. It is the glory of a commander to be obeyed: I say to one, Go, and he goeth, and to another, Come, and he cometh.' God looketh for glory from you in this kind; he will have all the world know that his servants are at his beck, that he hath called you to his foot,' Isa. xli. 2, the righteous from the east, he called him to his foot;' that is, to go to and fro at his command: if he say Go, they go; if he saith Come, they come; these are the people framed for his praise.' He can

bid them do nothing but they are ready to do it with the loss of all. Fourthly, God will be honoured as the utmost end; and so if in all acts, natural, moral, spiritual, we do not aim at his glory, we are guilty of ungodliness. In acts natural, and matters of the least consequence, we must have a supernatural aim: 1 Cor. x. 31, Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever you do, do all to the glory of God.' If I take a meal, I must have an aim at God's glory in it; in civil acts, and duties of mutual commerce, [100] all must be done as in and to the Lord, Eph. v. 22; vi. 1, 5-7. We are to walk in our relations so as God may have honour. In spiritual acts of prayer, praise, and worship, yea, the whole ordination of the spiritual life must be unto God: I live unto God,' Gal. ii. 20. All the motions and tendencies of the soul look that way. This is the difference between holiness and godliness; holiness more properly implieth a conformity to the law, and godliness an aim of the soul to exalt God; and so they are propounded as distinct, 2 Peter iii. 11, What manner of persons ought we to be in all holiness and godliness of conversation?' Well, then, look to your aims; and in eating and drinking you set up Moloch, it is a meat-offering and drink-offering to appetite, if you do not aim at God's glory. So in traffic; if you merely regard wealth, you are a consecrated priest to mammon. In these ordinary actions of eating, drinking, trading, you may be guilty of idolatry before you are aware, and may set up the belly, Phil. iii. 19, or mammon, Mat. vi. 24, in God's stead; nay, in your very desires of grace your ultimate aim must not be self. We are accepted in the beloved, to the praise of his glorious grace,' Eph. i. 6. And in actions most sacred it is dangerous to look a-squint; it is to put dung in God's own cup, when we make worship a stale to our own ends. In short, the Lord hath given many things to the creature, that only which he hath reserved to himself is his glory; therefore he

taketh it ill to be robbed of that.

Thus I have showed you the several kinds of ungodliness. Some are more refined, some more gross, but all naught. The worst sort is, when we do contemptuously slight his providence, and disobey his laws, hardening ourselves yet more and more,' as Ahaz did, though the Lord had exercised him with sharp afflictions, and living in open irreligion and despite of God, casting off yoke after yoke, till at length we have outgrown the heart of a man, fearing neither God nor men.

Use. Well, then, if we would not be counted ungodly, let us take heed of all these sins.

1. How else will ye look God in the face at the day of judgment? The ungodly shall not stand in judgment,' Ps. i. 5; that is, so as to be able to plead their cause, and lift up the head, though they shall rise again and receive their sentence; therefore ill rendered by the Vulgar, non resurgunt; yet they shall have no boldness, but hang their guilty heads for shame in that day; the day of judgment is appointed on purpose to take vengeance of ungodly persons,' see Jude 15. It is the day wherein God, that is now withdrawn within the curtain of the heavens, cometh forth to manifest himself to the terror of all ungodly ones.

2. There were great judgments inflicted upon them in this world. The flood swept away the world of the ungodly,' 2 Peter ii. 5, and 1 Peter iv. 18, Where shall the sinner and the ungodly appear?' The Lord's jealousy for his honour is very great, and therefore none shall smart so sorely as the ungodly person. It is said, Isa, lix. 17, He putteth on jealousy as a cloak;' the cloak is man's upper garment, which is most visible; there is nothing so visible in God's providence as his jealousy for his honour; there is no sin robs God of his honour so much as ungodliness; so it is said, Exod. xxxiv. 14, that jealousy is his

name.' The name of a thing is the note of distinction by which it is known and differenced from all other things either of the same or another kind; so God's jealousy against those that rob him of his honour differenceth him from all the gods of the world. The gods of the heathens were good-fellow gods, and could endure rivals and co-partners; but this the Lord doth severely punish; none have fallen under the weight of his vengeance so much as they that deny their respects to him, and go on whoring after another God.'

3. It is the great aim of the gospel to prevent ungodliness, by discovering more of God than was known before, and by finding out a way how the notions of God might be kept inviolable, and how we might come to the enjoyment of God, and yet God suffer no loss of honour; therefore the gospel is called the mystery of godliness,' 1 Tim. iii. 16, and a doctrine according to godliness,' 1 Tim. vi. 3. Men might be ungodly at a cheaper rate than now they can in these days of the gospel: now we have more means to know God, and more obligations to respect God, more clear and certain notions of his excellency and glory.

4. Ungodliness is the root of all irregular courses. Abraham was afraid of himself in Gerar. Why? The fear of God is not in this place,' Gen. xx. 11. Godliness is the great bulwark of laws and all honest discipline; subjects are not afraid of princes, nor princes of subjects, where the fear of God prevaileth: there can be no true honesty without piety. The first part of the law provideth for respects to God, as being the proper foundation of the second, which containeth respects to our neighbour. Often it cometh to pass by God's just judgment that spiritual wickedness is punished with civil; see Hosea iv. 12, 13; and where men are not tender of God's interests they do also encroach upon civil rights and freedoms.

Means and directions are these:--(1.) Purge the heart from principles of ungodliness. There are many gross maxims ingrafted in man's heart; as that it is folly to be precise; that it was better when there was less knowledge; that it is in vain to serve God; that thoughts are free; if we carry it fair before men we need trouble ourselves no further; when men do their best, petty sins are not to be stood upon; that religion is but a notion and fancy, the gospel a golden dream, &c. That such principles are within us appeareth by the sottishness of our practices and course of living; for actions are the best image of our thoughts, and these are purged away by waiting upon the word, which discovereth' them, Heb. iv. 12, and layeth in good principles, Ps. cxix. 9, by which means they are destroyed. (2.) Suppress all ungodly thoughts as soon as they do arise, as that there is no God,' Ps. xiv. 1. Shame may lay a restraint upon the tongue, but the heart is ever casting up such a thought as this is: so that God is not so harsh but we may take a little liberty in sinning, see Ps. 1. 21; or that he taketh no notice of what we speak or do; he cannot see through the dark clouds,' Job xxii. 12, 13. When any such thoughts rush into your mind, check them and actually rebuke them, lest they settle into a rooted atheism. (3.) Mortify vile affections: the judgment is tainted by the contagion of lusts, as a foul stomach sendeth up fumes and gross vapours into the head; and so the principles of godliness do quickly suffer an eclipse: The pure in heart see most of God,' Mat. v. 8. In fenny countries the air is seldom clear; so in hearts that lie under the power of brutish lusts, there are seldom clear and distinct thoughts of God. (4.) Keep close to God's institutions; these keep up his presence and memorial in the world, and so are the best preservative of godliness; false worships are full of ceremonies which darken the nature of God. Images beget a gross opinion of God: no

wonder if people grow blockish that worship God in a senseless stock or stone. Varro in Austin observed, that those that first invented images did but increase error, and take away all fear of religion. God knoweth what is best for himself, and how by his own institutions to keep up the repute of his nature and essence: when man presumeth to be wiser than God, and leaveth the certainty of God's institutions for additions and innovations of Our own, that please us better, because they have lo'gon sophi'as, A show of wisdom,' Col. ii. 22, 23, all religion goeth to wrack. (5.) Let us often exercise ourselves unto godliness,' 1 Tim. iv. 7. Delight to give to God the honour due to him, love, delight, fear; to worship him often, to do all things as aiming at his glory.

Fourthly, The next clause in the description of these seducers is that, turning the grace of our God into wantonness. Where you may take notice--(1.) Of their filthiness and brutish course of life, implied in the word wantonness, in the original ase'lgeia, a word proper to luxury and the impurities of lust; it is derived from alpha, an augmentative particle, and Selga, the name of a town in Pisidia, saith Suidas, whose inhabitants were infamous for sodomy, and weakening nature by such prodigious filthiness as is not fit to be named among saints; and the persons here noted the school of Simon. The Nicolaitans, the Gnostics, and other impure heretics of that age were for promiscuous commixtures, and the free use of their fellow creatures (as some carnal wretches in our own age have learned to speak), without any respect to conjugal relation, and those restraints which God and nature and all civil nations have laid upon the lusts of man, as if men should use no more distinction and confinement than the beasts; yea, gave up themselves to all manner of unnatural lust, as in the process of this epistle we shall more fully discover. (2.) The occasion and encouragement of this wantonness, which doubleth the iniquity of it, is the grace of God, by

which is meant the gospel, which is called the grace of God,' as Titus ii. 11, The grace of God hath appeared unto us, teaching us,' &c.; and in the gospel chiefly they abused the doctrine of Christian liberty and free justification by Christ; this is primarily intended. You may, by analogy, enlarge the expression to comprise all those other doctrines which libertines are apt to abuse; yea, those gracious providences which wicked men do convert into fuel and nourishment for their sins.

(3.) The manner how so excellent a thing as the grace of God was made pliable to so vile a purpose, for a man would wonder that things at so great and infinite a distance as the grace of God and filthy lusts should ever be brought to cast an aspect upon one another. That is showed in the word turning, in the original metatithe'ntes, wresting, transferring from its proper use. They offered violence to the doctrine of grace, that it might be conscious to such a monstrous birth and production as filthy lusts and carnal pleasures. (4.) You have a hint of the reason why the apostle writeth against them with such a zealous indignation in that word our; as if he said, That grace, whose sweetness we have tasted, whose power we have felt; of that God who hath been so kind to us in Christ, whose glory we are bound to promote. Shall we see our God, and that grace upon which all our hopes stand, to be abused to such an unclean use?

From the words thus opened I observe:--

Obs. 1. That the gospel and grace of God in itself is not pliable to carnal purposes, yieldeth no carnal conclusions. They turn it, saith the apostle; there is no such thing gotten out of the gospel without wresting, and till the art of a deceiver hath passed upon it. I shall prove the point by three arguments.

1. From the constitution of the gospel. It yieldeth no leave to sin, but liberty to serve God: this is the great design of it. Christ came

not to reconcile God and our sins together, but God and our persons; to reconcile our persons and destroy our sins; not to free us from the law, but sin; to free us from the service of the devil, 1 John iii. 8, not from the service of God; in short, he came not to make the law less strict, or sin less odious, or us less holy; for perfection of the law was never so clearly known as since the coming of Christ, see Mat. v., and sin was never so odious as since the abundance of grace. They under the law sinned at a cheaper rate than we can, because they did not sin against so much love and kindness, see Heb. ii. 2, 3; neither could Christ come to make us less holy, or to dispense with our care of holiness, for then he should come to deface the image of God, and make us more unlike God, which would not be a privilege but a burden to the new creature. Freedom from wrath and hell is a privilege, but freedom from duty and obedience is no privilege. In the gospel there is pardon for failings, but not to encourage us in our failings, but our duties.

We were never so much obliged to duty as since the gospel, because now we have more help and more advantages, stronger motives and greater encouragements. If we look backward, we are bound in point of gratitude to serve the Lord, being redeemed hereunto by the blood of Jesus; if we look forward, we are encouraged by the hopes of eternal life. The law could not persuade by such arguments as the gospel doth; there is more of the rule known, more of the Spirit poured out to give us help to observe it. So that from this short abridgment of larger discourses, it appeareth that the great design of the gospel is to make us more like God, and to free us from the slavery of the devil, that we may be better servants and subjects to God.

2. There are frequent and constant dissuasives from this perverting our liberty in Christ to the service of any fleshly design. The Spirit of God foresaw how corrupt nature in us would tempt us to abuse our

privileges to an evil purpose; yea, many had already attempted it in the apostles' days, as the sect of the Nicolaitans, the school of Simon, and, after them, the Gnostics and Basilicans, who, under colour of evangelical liberty, gave up themselves to lawless and brutish practices (as before was hinted); therefore, by way of prevention, dissuasives are very frequent everywhere; as Rom. vi. 1, What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid.' As if he had said, You will not want such corrupt teachers, nay, your hearts will be marvellous apt to frame such kind of consequences and conclusions; but reject them with indignation. So Gal. v. 13, You are called to liberty; only use not your liberty as an occasion to the flesh.' Christ hath done his part, purchased glorious privileges for you; only take you heed that you do not abuse them; your base hearts are apt enough. So 1 Peter ii. 16, As free, but not using your liberty as a cloak of maliciousness.' Freedom by Christ will be an unfit cover and pretence for so vile a practice.

3. Because in the gospel itself there are quite contrary inferences and conclusions from those which flesh and blood would draw from the gospel. As to instance, in anything wherein the gospel hath been abused, to three ends hath it been abused--to looseness, laziness, licentiousness. Now, you shall see the word carrieth things in a quite contrary way to what carnal men do. To looseness: men have been the more loose and careless, because grace hath abounded in the discoveries of the gospel; but the apostle disdaineth it, as a most abhor rent and strange conclusion from gospel principles: Rom. vi. 1, Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid.' Me` ge'noito, do not cherish such a vile and unworthy thought; the gospel teacheth quite contrary; see Titus ii. 11, 12; not wantonness, but weanedness, 4 to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts.' So see Rom. vi. 16, and 2 Cor.

vii. 1. A bee gathereth honey thence from whence a spider sucketh poison. Again, to laziness: men are apt to lie down upon the bed of ease, and say Christ must do all, and so exclude all use of means and the endeavour of the creature. This is a foul abuse; for the scripture inferreth thence the care and work of the creature, be cause God doth all, Phil. ii. 12, 13, Work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God worketh in you both to will and to do.' We must the more humbly wait upon God in the use of ordinances, because all dependeth upon his assistance. Again, to licen tiousness: men have interpreted freedom by Christ in such a perverse sense as to cast off obedience to civil powers, either to masters in the family, or to magistrates in the commonwealth; whereas the word calleth for these duties upon this very ground, because we are made free by Christ, that is, more ready and apt to discharge the duty we owe to God and man: in this sense it is said, 1 Cor. vii. 22, that a servant is the Lord's freeman;' and 1 Peter ii. 16, Obey governors as free, but as servants of the Lord.' Christianity giveth us a greater aptness, layeth on us a greater engagement, the bond of conscience; so that there is, as Salvian speaketh, in maxima libertate minima licentia, a great deal of liberty by Christ, and yet the strongest engagement to service that may be.

Let us now apply the point.

Use 1. It serveth to inform us, in the first place, that carnal men are ill skilled in consequences; from the very gospel would they draw a liberty to sin, than which from such premises no conclusion can be more strange; it is well worth the observing to note the different arguings in scripture from the same principles, as see some instances; compare 1 Cor. vii. 29 with 1 Cor. xv. 32: the principle in both places is, The time is short.' Now, the apostle in the former place draweth from it conclusions of strictness, temperance, and mortification: Let us use

the world as if we used it not,' &c. But in the latter the dissolute epicure argueth quite otherwise, Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we shall die;' a quite different conclusion from the same principle. So here, grace aboundeth; let us be much in duty, saith the spiritual man; let sin abound, saith the carnal. Again, compare 2 Sam. vii. 2 with Hag. i. 2: I dwell within a house of cedar,' saith David, but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains.' Surely I should have had more care of the ark of God, now God hath built me such a stately palace. But they in Haggai, we dwell in ceiled houses,' therefore the time to build the Lord's house is not come;' so they might live in pomp and ease, they little cared how matters went with God's house. Once more, 1 Sam.' iii. 18, It is the Lord; let him do what seemeth him good:' he argueth from thence to meekness and a submissive patience. But now compare 2 Kings vi. 33, This evil is from the Lord; why should I wait upon him any longer?' From the same principle he argueth himself into a murmuring and fit of impatience. Thus carnal men are always out in their reasonings: A parable in a fool's mouth,' saith Solomon, is like a thorn in the hand of a drunkard,' Prov. xxvi. 9. When the spirits are disturbed by excess of drink, men have not an even touch, and so when they would use a thorn, or any sharp thing, they wound and gore themselves; so do wicked men, being besotted with lusts, argue falsely from the grace and the holy principles of the word to their own destruction.

Use 2. Again, it serveth for caution; when you meet with such base inferences from evangelical principles, do not blame the gospel, or the ministry and dispensation of the gospel.

1. Not the gospel, as if it were not clear enough, or faithful enough, or wary enough. Such thoughts are wont to haunt us when we see gross errors creeping under a shelter and pretence of scripture: foolish men

would give laws to heaven; we think God should speak more plainly, as if the Lord should make a sun for them to see that shut their eyes: vain man will stumble in God's plainest ways; should things be never so clearly carried, a perverse apprehension would make them obscure. Parables (which are the liveliest and most sensible representations of things) hardened the Pharisees, Mark iv. 11, 12. If men ruin themselves by their own false logic, we should not therefore accuse God. They that have a mind to fall shall not want a stone of stumbling; they that will only be feasted with comforts, no wonder if they contract a spiritual sickness, and undo their souls by a misunderstood and misapplied gospel.

2. Do not blame the ministry and dispensation of the gospel, because some abuse free grace, others cannot endure to hear it preached; but children must not be kept from their bread because dogs catch at it. Because some are drunk with wine,' and others eat to excess, shall the hungry man want his food? Shall hungry consciences lose their portion for others' abuse? No, no; if carnal men serve their lusts of these truths, we cannot help it; we are not in the place of God: we can only deliver the doctrine; we cannot give them gracious hearts to improve it. The Papists will not let the people have the scriptures upon this reason, for fear of abuses; and Gardiner would not have this gap of free grace opened to the people, &c: The devil hath ever maligned a gospel dispensation. Let not us withhold the truth for fear of inconvenience. Let us look to our commission, preach the gospel to every creature;' if men abuse it, we are clear, their destruction is just,' as the apostle speaketh to this very case: Rom. iii. 8, Some slanderously report that we say, Let us do evil that good may come thereof, whose damnation is just.' Some gave out that Paul taught that they might sin freely, that God might have the more glory in

pardoning;' their damnation is just'; if they went away with such a vile conceit, saith he, they learned it not from me. Musculus complaineth in one of his books that no place was so profane and irreligious as those where the gospel had been preached; and Contzen, [101] a Jesuit, citing this passage, crieth out; See the fruit of Protestantism and their gospel preaching. Many are of his spirit; do even hate the publication of the doctrine of grace, as if these were the cause of men's miscarriage. If men abuse the truth, we cannot help it; however, visible mistakes must be prevented, lest men go away with a scorpion instead of fish, and a stone instead of bread.

Obs. 2. The next point, that though grace itself be not pliable to such conclusions, yet wicked men are very apt to abuse it to the countenancing and cherishing of their sins and lusts. You see here the abuse of the doctrine of the gospel was very ancient; this spirit of error wrought betimes; the former days were no better than these, Eccles. vii. 10. In the apostles' days, vile hearts did abuse good doctrine; men were the same then which they are now, when such kind of errors have a second spring and revolution. Indeed, of all errors these seem to be very natural; we greedily drink in the poison of carnal liberty. But let me give you the reasons why ungodly men take liberty and occasion from the grace of God to serve their sinful lusts and pleasures.

1. Because carnal hearts do assimilate all that they meet with, and turn it into the nourishment of their carnal lusts: as the salt sea turneth the fresh rivers and the sweet showers of heaven into salt waters, so do carnal men pervert the holy principles of the gospel; or as sweet liquors are soon soured in an unclean vessel, so do truths lose their use and efficacy when laid up in a carnal heart, and are quite turned to another purpose.

2. Because they would fain sin securely, et cum privilegio, with a free dispensation from God, and therefore seek by all means to entitle God to the sin, and the sin to God. They would find a great deal of ease from gripes of conscience if they could make God the author, or at least the countenancer, of their evil practices; and therefore when they can rub their guilt upon the gospel, and pretend a liberty by Christ, the design is accomplished. Augustine often taketh notice that the heathens took the most liberty to sin, because their gods were represented as approvers and countenancers of such kind of actions. If men could once make God an approver of sin, and giving leave to satisfy our desires, the design of carnal nature were at an end, and they would be freed of that awe of a divine power which is only left in nature as the check and restraint of sin; and therefore because God hath revealed so much of his indulgence to the fallen creature in the gospel, they strive to draw all the passages of it that way, as if God had given leave to sin freely.

3. Because man is obedient naturally no longer than when under impressions of awe and fear; the cords of a man,' Hosea xi. 4, work little with us; like beasts, we only put forward when we feel the goad. Violent means do more than gentle persuasions and the sweet strains of grace. Usually where we are dealt with in that kind, we wax wanton and kick with the heels,' Deut. xxxii. 15, as an ass-colt, being suckled and full, kicks her dam in the forehead.

4. Because we all naturally desire liberty, carnal liberty, to be left to our own sway and bent, and therefore we catch at anything that tendeth that way. We would be as gods, lords of our own actions, and so are very apt to dream of an exemption from all kind of law but our own lusts: the seducer's bait was a promise of liberty,' 2 Peter ii. 19. We would all be above check and control, and have scope and room for our

lusts: Ps. xii. 4, Our lips are our own, who is lord over us?' We would fain bring it to that, to be at our own dispose, to be answerable to none that should call us to an account. The tumult of the nations against Christ was about bonds and yokes, Ps. ii. 3. The pale or the yoke is grievous to us, see Job xi. 12; Jer. xxxi. 18. Now being so resolved to be free, we are willing to hear of liberty, and apt to abuse whatever sounds to that purpose.

But now let us see how many ways the grace of God may be turned into wantonness; a right knowledge of the evil may be a means to prevent it. There is a grace dispensed in the way of God's providence, which may be called the grace of God, and is very liable to abuse: a word of that before I come to the main thing here intended. Thus we find the patience of God often abused; when the Lord keepeth silence in heaven, and doth not presently thunder down vengeance on the heads of sinners, Ps. xxxvi. 2; Zeph. i. 12, we wallow in ease and fleshly delights, and dream of a perpetual happiness, and think we shall do as well as the precisest of them all: Eccles. viii. 11, Because vengeance is not executed speedily, therefore the heart is set in them to do evil.' Thus doth man's venomous nature suck poison out of so sweet an attribute as God's patience. And as God's patience is abused, so is also his goodness and bounty. When we are full and enjoy plenty we grow wanton, and either despise our mercies, Mal. i. 2, Wherein hast thou loved us?' or, which is worse, despise God himself, turn back upon the mercy-seat, grow very negligent, cold, and careless in the worship of God; nay, many times the mind is efferated, and grown brutish and insolent both towards God and man: Hosea xiii. 6, According to their pasture so were they filled; they were filled and their heart was exalted, they have forgotten me.' Men have large pastures and strong lusts, and then God is forgotten; there is not that care of God, that sense of duty, that

meekness of spirit; this is growing wanton with God's goodness. Once more, there is another grace of providence which is apt to be abused, and that is the vouchsafement of ordinances, or the means of grace, in great plenty; a mercy prized when it first cometh among a people, but within a little while they grow wanton: 1 Sam. iii. 1, The word of God was precious in those days, for there was no open vision.' Whilst visions are scarce they are highly prized, but when they are open and public, men begin to grow giddy, cannot be contented with the simplicity of God's ordinances, but must be fed with ungrounded subtleties and quintessential extracts; when spiritual appetite groweth wanton it is an ill sign, when plain truths will not down, and all things must be carried in an airy, subtle, and notional way; God will have a scourge for such a wanton people.

But let us come closer to the matter in hand. This text speaketh of doctrinal discoveries of grace, of the abuse of the gospel, and the principles thereof. Now it were a hard task to give you an account of all the paralogisms and corrupt inferences which men draw from the gospel; there is no doctrine but, one way or another, a carnal heart is apt to abuse it. The most usual abuses are these:--

1. The doctrine of election is abused; men say they may live as they list; if God hath elected them they shall be saved, and so allow themselves in their careless neglect of the means of salvation. Be not deceived; God, that decreeth the end, decreeth the means: God hath predestinated us to be conformed to the image of his Son.' Rom. viii. 29; in grace here as well as in glory hereafter.

2. The doctrine of the attributes of God's mercy and long-suffering. Men will say they are sinners, and so are others; but God is merciful, and so poor, ignorant drunkards, adulterers, and swearers, as they are, they die with this principle in their mouths, God is merciful. But be

not deceived; neither fornicators nor adulterers, &c., shall enter into the kingdom of God,' 1 Cor. vi. 9; so Eph. v. 6, Let no man deceive you with vain words, for because of these things cometh the wrath of God.' Both these places show there were divers which had such deceitful thoughts, as if living and dying drunkards, adulterers, &c., they should go to heaven. Others abuse the long-suffering of God to their delaying and putting off their repentance, as if, after a long vicious life, provided they could be devote at the last gasp, they should at length be saved, and of a sudden from swine become saints. As many delayed their baptism heretofore, because they would have longer time to sin in, and to walk after their own lusts, and when they were warned of their licentious course, their answer was, Tunc demum a peccatis desistam cum baptizatus ero--when I am baptized I will live otherwise. Thou fool! besides the uncertainty of thy having time or grace to repent, this is a manifest abuse of God's patience, and will turn to thy greater ruin, Rom. ii. 4, 5.

3. The doctrine of gospel grace is abused many ways. Sometimes to exclude the fear and reverence of God, as if fear were an antiquated grace, suiting only with a legal dispensation: whereas the children of God think the more grace the more fear: Ps. cxxx. 4, There is mercy with thee, therefore thou shouldst be feared;' and Hosea iii. 5, They shall fear the Lord and his goodness.' The goodness of God doth not make them presumptuous, but is the greater matter of reverence and holy trembling: fear is so far from being abolished in the gospel that it continueth in heaven, it being an essential and necessary respect from the creature to the creator. Again, it is abused to deny all humiliation and sorrow for sins, yea, all confession of sins, as if to be humbled for sins were legal; whereas repentance and all the acts of it is a mere gospel duty; the law knew no such thing, and the truest

and most genuine sorrow ariseth from a sense of pardon: Zech. xii. 10, They shall look upon him whom they have pierced, and mourn;' so Luke vii. 47, that Christian Niobe loved much and wept much, and all be cause much was forgiven. John speaketh to believers, to them that walked in the light, to confess their sins, 1 John i. 9; we cannot have pardon in God's way till this be done: If we confess,' &c. It is a condition not for which, but without which, pardon is not obtained; it doth not show the cause, but the order of graces working. Again, sometimes it is abused to the neglecting of circumspection and heed in us. We are preserved in Christ, say they, and therefore we may be careless, and though we cast ourselves upon snares, temptations, and occasions to sin, be confident that God will keep us. The devil sets upon Christ with such a temptation: Mat. iv. 6, Cast thyself down, and he shall give his angels charge over thee,' Libertines scoff at the niceness and scrupulousness of former professors, that were willing to keep at such a distance from a temptation, as if their strict and exact walking were a fruit of their darkness and legal spiritedness; whereas the apostle maketh it a main property of children of light' thus to do, Eph. v. 15. So God's doing all in the covenant of grace is abused to exclude all care of duty, and to keep men in a lazy oscitancy, and gaping for grace without all care or endeavour on our part; whereas God loveth to be met with in his own way, and cometh in with supplies of grace according to our diligence in the use of means; see Mark iv. 34; and as it is abused, to shut out all endeavours after grace, so all actings and operations under grace; as if we were mere logs rather than rational agents, and God so did all that the act of our own faculties were quite abolished or suspended; whereas though the grace be from God, yet the act is ours, for otherwise the faintness and defectiveness of the operation would be chargeable upon him, and the Lord doth so

draw us that we have a motion of our own: Draw me and we will run after thee,' Cant. i. 4. It is he that treads down Satan,' but under our feet.' Rom. xvi. 20. The doctrine of Christian liberty, which is one part of the gospel, is abused to exclude the moral law, as a rule of duties to God and man; whereas the apostle saith, I am not a'nomos, but e'nnomos, not without the law to God, but under the law to Christ,' 1 Cor. ix. 21. Sometimes it is abused to a living to the height of the creature (as some carnal wretches phrase it), or an immoderate use of carnal comforts; whereas to restrain us in this kind, the scripture forbiddeth licentiousness in the use of the creatures under such terms as do imply the lawful use. See Luke xvii. 27, and Isa. xxii. 13. The things mentioned there are necessary for the supportation of life; but the immoderate use is intended, because they did nothing else but mind these things. He that will do all that he may, will soon do more than he should. The doctrine of spiritual worship, and abolishing the shadows of the law, which is another part of the gospel, is abused to the neglect and contempt of ordinances and acts of solemn worship, as if all were but forms, not suiting with that spirituality unto which they think they are called in these days of the gospel; and so constant prayer is laid aside as a form, whereas God calleth for daily worship in this kind, Mat. vi. 11, and making conscience of hearing the word: a form too low for them that pretend to live immediately upon the Spirit; whereas the scripture joineth word and Spirit together, as inseparable in the dispensation, Isa. lix. 21; and the apostle in one verse saith, Despise not prophesying,' 1 Thes. v. 19; and presently, ver. 20, Quench not the Spirit,' [102] implying whosoever doth the one will certainly do the other. So the use of the seals, baptism and the supper, as forms fit for novices; but they are of a more elevated strain, and above these lower helps, enjoying so much in the inward and hidden man;

whereas Christ hath enjoined these ordinances for the use of all sorts of Christians till he come again to judge the world. See Mat. xxviii. 20, and 1 Cor. xi. 26. So instructing children a form, though we have express command for it in scripture, Eph. vi. 4. It were easy to rake in this puddle, but this taste may suffice.

Use 1. The use of all is to make us more cautious and wary, that we may not be guilty of this great sin.

1. It is the error of the wicked, 2 Peter iii. 16. It is a black mark to grow the more wanton for mercies, secure for patience, sensual, vain, negligent, careless, because of the free tenders of grace in the gospel; there cannot be a more evident mark of a man in a carnal condition. It is sad when our table is made a snare;' but it is worse when the very gospel is made a snare, for the better things are, the worse is the abuse, and more dangerous. Look, as it is a mark of the love of God to have all things work together for good to us.' Rom. viii. 28, so it is an argument of the hatred of God when all things prove a snare, and the very gospel itself, the blessed gospel of the glorious God, is cursed to us. Oh! how sad is their condition.

2. It is a sin against mercy, and those of all others are most dangerous. When you abuse grace, you make grace your enemy; and it is ill for creatures when grace is their enemy, and there is nothing left for them but justice and wrath; justice will take up the quarrel of abused mercy, and, as grace is despised, so wrath taketh place: They treasure up wrath,' &c., Rom. ii. 4, 5.

3. It is foul ingratitude to turn our mercies into a provocation, to make a calf of our ear-rings, and to serve our lusts of God's providence; as he said of Adam, that what he received, me'los, a rib, he returned. .'3eXo?, a dart, alluding to his fall by Eve. So to fight against God with his own weapons, what vile ingratitude is that! See

Jer. v. 7; Ezek. vii. 20. To make plenty the fuel of our lusts, what is it but to make God serve with our sins,' Isa. xliii. 24, and to grow worse for the gospel, black and tawny because the sun of righteousness hath looked upon us? It is as it were to give it out to the world as if he did serve with our sins by his own consent, and we had a license from heaven to do what we do.

4. It is a great grief to the Spirit of God when you abuse grace. You do as it were put your miscarriages upon him, when you call licentious walking Christian liberty, and neglect of duty gospel freedom, and godly sorrow legalism, and strict walking superstitious niceness; you do as it were father your bastards upon the Spirit, and entitle the monstrous conceptions and births of your own carnal hearts to his incubation and overshadowing; you think God warranteth you in all this, and that is a high wrong to him which he will avenge in due time; see Ps. 1. 21, 22. I remember the prophet saith, Jer. iv. 10, O Lord! thou hast greatly deceived this people,' because the false prophets had done it in his name; false doctrines make God to be the deceiver, and these ill consequences drawn from the gospel are in effect charged upon the Spirit, who is the author of it.

Well, then, learn the truth as it is in Jesus, Eph. iv. 21.

[1.] First, make him your teacher; flesh and blood will stumble in God's plainest ways. We cannot learn any gospel truth of ourselves, but we are apt to pervert it to an ill use.

[2.] Take the whole doctrine together; for it is the truth as it is in Jesus, otherwise it is the truth as it is in the mouth of a false teacher. Half-truth hath filled the world with looseness; when men divide between Christ's comforts and Christ's graces, his priesthood and his regality, his benefits and his laws, these partial apprehensions spoil all.

[3.] As to your manner of learning, let it be saving, and such as tends to practice. It is not enough to make Christ our teacher by using his word, and looking for the direction of his Spirit, and to make the whole counsel of God our lesson; but also we must learn to a saving purpose, to put off the old man, to put on the new, and not to store the brain with knowledge so much as the heart with grace; for to this end is the gospel given to us, not for science so much as practice, to make us better rather than wiser and more knowing.

Use 2. Another use is examination, to put us upon trial whether we do not, yea or no, turn the grace of God into wantonness.' A man may be right in doctrine, and yet the constitution of his spirit may be naught. Again, there may be a fond dotage on the name of Christ, and yet no real respect to him; therefore it behoves us to search how the gospel works with us.

[1.] Are you not the better for the knowledge of it? If you are not the better you are the worse. If you know Christ, and come short of the hour [103] of his grace, you know him in vain; you make Christ and the gospel a useless thing. Compare 2 Cor. vi. 1 with Col. i. 6: there is a receiving the grace of God in vain,' and a knowing the grace of God in truth.' We receive it in vain when we are nothing the better for it; and we receive it in truth when we feel the sweetness and power of it upon our hearts and consciences. Those that know the grace in truth are the more vigilant, more humble, more holy. They are more diligent, for the grace of God hath a mighty constraint to urge us to duty, 2 Cor. v. 14, 15: more humble, nothing so melting as grace, Zech. xii. 10; unkindness after so much grace as we have received in Christ is the great reason and cause of godly sorrow: more holy, nothing kindles such a rage and indignation against sin as grace doth: Ezra ix. 14, Should we again after such a deliverance,' &c.; nothing persuadeth by such

powerful arguments to the practice of holiness as grace doth; see Titus ii. 11-14. Therefore what are you the better? If it worketh not thus, it is sad.

2. Are you the worse sensibly for the knowledge of the gospel?

First, Do you grow more careless and neglectful of duties, as if now there were not so much required of you? The gospel never taught you that, but your own corrupt hearts. It is true, the more Christ is preached, the more evangelical a man is in his duties; his heart is taken off more from resting in them, he doth not pitch his hopes upon the tale or number of his duties, and he doth not perform them out of bondage, but more clearly, knowingly, comfortably, as upon gospel grounds; but still he will be performing, as knowing that duties can never have too much of our care, and too little of our trust: in the gospel we have more help, therefore, in all reason, we should perform more work. Well, then, to grow more lazy and less frequent in the worship of God, and the use of the means of grace, the more we are acquainted with God's grace in Christ, is to abuse grace, which was given us to make us more cheerful, not more slack and negligent.

Secondly, Less circumspect and wary in your conversations; loose walking is an ill sign. Christ himself taught us to enter in at the strait gate, and to walk in the narrow way,' Mat. vii. 13, 14. When men seek more room and breadth for their lusts, they pervert the end of the gospel, for the gospel only showeth that the greatest sin is pardonable, but the least is not allowable. The world is much for a shorter cut to heaven; but when you have done all, you will find that the good, old, long way is the nearest way home. Still we must make straight steps to our feet;' mortify lusts, bridle vile affections, and keep close to rule. Sin is the same that ever it was; and the law is the same; and God is as holy, and as much delights in holiness, as ever

he did; we therefore must be as strict as ever. It is but a carnal liberty to have leave to be wanton, to be free to sin. Nature is very apt to hear in that ear, see 2 Peter ii. 18, 19, but grace counts it no privilege.

Thirdly, If less humble, still you are guilty. A man committeth sin and findeth no remorse, upon the pretence of God's free grace in pardoning; this is still the wantonness which ariseth from the abuse of the gospel God's children never loathe themselves more than upon the remembrance of mercy, Ezek. xxxvi. 31, never melted for sin more than when the warm beams of God's love thaw their hearts, that they should sin against a pardoning God, a gracious Father, a good Master, &c. Every mercy is a new stab at heart. Christ's look made Peter weep bitterly; nothing affects them so much as grace.

Obs. 3. The third point is taken from that particle our, te`n tou theou emon. He mentioneth their interest in God to provoke them so much the more to zeal against errors that were so scandalous to his grace. Note that sense of interest in God begets the best zeal for the truths and glory of God. The point consists of two branches:--

1. That interest in God will beget a zeal for God. It troubleth a good man to see any one wronged, much more to see his own relations wronged, most of all to see his God wronged. Can a man profess love to God, and not espouse his quarrel? Friends have all things common, common love and common hatred, wrong the one and the other is not well at ease; so it is in the spiritual friendship between us and God: Ps. lxix. 9, The reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me.' Injuries done to God and religion will as nearly affect us as those done to our persons. Certainly they that can be silent in the cause of God have little affection to him, and they who are so tender of worldly interests do little value an interest in God: Wisdom is justified of

her children,' Mat. xi. 19. They are bastards and not children that are afraid or ashamed to own their mother's defence, or can hug those in their bosoms that are enemies to God and his grace: Ps. cxxxix. 21, Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee? am not I grieved with them that rise up against thee?' It is an argument of his sincerity that God and he had the same enemies, that he could find no room in his heart for affection to them that had no affection to God. When we came into covenant with God, we made a league with him offensive and defensive, to count his friends ours and his enemies ours, to hate what he hateth and to love what he loveth; therefore, without breach of covenant we cannot be silent in God's cause, and friends to the enemies and abusers of his grace.

2. The next branch is, that their zeal who have an interest in God is the best zeal. Now it is the best, partly because it is hottest. They that contest merely for an opinion are not so earnest as they that contend out of affection; as a stranger, seeing a man oppressed, may chide him that did the wrong, but a near relation he will interpose and venture himself in the quarrel; so will one that loveth God sacrifice all his interests for God's sake. Partly because it is purest. Carnal men may engage in religious controversies, out of passion they may stickle for their own opinion, but this fire is taken from a common hearth, not from the altar; it doth not arise from any love to God, from any inward relish and taste of the sweetness of grace, but only from humour and obstinacy and worldly interest; we may as well be afraid of some men's zeal against error as of others' proneness to it. Carnal persons keep a great coil, and fill the world with clamour and rage; but their hearts do not flame with zeal upon a proper interest, and do not carry on things in God's way.

The use is to inform us of the reason why the spirits of godly men are

so keen against such errors as intrench upon the grace of God; why errors about Christ are horrible to them, a very abomination to their thoughts; because thereupon are built all their hopes; and in such matters they have most experiences; therefore their hearts sparkle within them; others feel a cold indifferency, but they a mighty pressure upon their spirits.

I now come to the last part of their description, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. Observe their sin, denying. The object, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is here described three ways:--(1.) By his absolute rule and supremacy, despoten monon, the only Lord. (2.) By his essence, theo`n, God. (3.) By his headship over the church, kurion hemon, our Lord Jesus Christ.

I shall first vindicate, and then open the words. Divers take the words disjunctively, applying the first clause to the Father, the second to the Son. So Erasmus translateth it, God, who is that only Lord,' and our Lord Jesus Christ.' But, as Beza observeth, this is not the first time that he is taken tripping in those places which seem manifestly to assert the Godhead of Christ. Briefly, then, that the whole clause is to be understood of Christ may be proved by these arguments:--(1.) Because the parallel place in Peter, from whence this seemeth to be taken, maketh mention only of Jesus Christ, where despo'tes, the word of absolute sovereignty, is ascribed to him, denying to`n despo'ten, the master that bought them,' 2 Peter ii. 1. (2.) Because to me it seemeth that Jude would lay down all the prerogatives of Christ in his natures, as God, as man; in his relation to the world, so a master; to the church, so a Lord. (3.) By the tenor of the words in the original, where there is no new article to divide them, and therefore all these titles belong to the same person, ton monon despoten, to`n theo`n kurion hemon, arnou'menoi. (4.) Many old copies, as Calvin saith, read

thus, Denying Christ, who is only God and only Lord,' (5.) Because the heresy of these times struck at Christ more than God the Father, and only at the Father for Christ's sake; and therefore John, in his epistles, speaketh often of those that denied Christ. See 1 John ii. 22, and 1 John iv. 3. It is true the school of Simon and some other sects held forth many fabulous things of God, and introduced multitudes of rulers by whom the world was governed; but this was to exclude Christ, and to make void that sovereignty which the scriptures assert to be committed into his hands. The most ancient heresies were those of the Simonians, Menandrians, Saturninians, who denied the person of Christ, affirming Simon Magus to be Christ; and the Valentinians, who denied his human nature, affirming that he brought his substance from heaven, and only passed through the Virgin Mary like water through a conduit. There is but one objection against this exposition, and that is, if it be meant of Christ, then the Father will be excluded from being God, for Christ, according to the sense alleged, is said to be only master, only God, and only Lord. I answer--The expression doth not exclude either of the persons of the Godhead, the Father or the Son, but only the creatures and feigned gods, especially those feigned rulers and governors of the world which the school of Simon and the Nicolaitans introduced under the horrid names of Barbel, Abrakan, and Kavlakan, &c. And indeed such kind of expressions are frequent in scripture, as Isa. xliv. 8, Is there a God beside me? Yea, there is no God, I know not any.' So Isa. xlv. 5, I am the Lord, there is none else, there is none besides me.' All which expressions are meant of Christ, as appeareth not only by the titles of Saviour and Redeemer, given to the God that there speaketh, but also by divers passages therein proper to him, yea, by a quotation of the apostle's. Compare Isa. xlv. 22, 23, with Rom. xiv, 11, and Phil. ii. 10. Again, you shall

find like pas sages of God the Father, where he is said to be only true God: John xvii. 3, This is life eternal, to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent;' which is not exclusive of other persons, but of other gods; and the scriptures speak thus because of the unity of the divine essence, which all the persons communicate one with another.

The exposition of the words, now they are vindicated, will be easy. And denying. This is done either openly or covertly: openly when Christ is clearly renounced and opposed; covertly, Christ is denied either by the filthy conversation of Christians, or else by heretical insinuations striking at his person and natures at a distance. Both are intended for these seducers. Though they denied Christ, yet they had their pretences and illusions. This Christ whom they denied is described by his relation in the world, the only master or ruler. This word is opposed to their doting conceit of many rulers, between whom the regimen of the world was divided. The next title is theo`n, Gods. So Christ is called because of his divine nature; and then our Lord. He saith our partly to show that this was the title that he bore in relation to the church, they being his peculiar people by his father's gift and his own purchase; partly to awaken their zeal by a consideration of the interest which they had in this Lord thus denied; and then the other word, Lord, is proper to Christ's mediatorship. See 1 Cor. viii. 5.

There remaineth but Christ's name, Jesus Christ. The word Jesus is opened, Mat. i. 21: Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins;' and it implieth here that Christ's Lordship shall be administered for the salvation of the church. The other word, Christ, signifieth anointed, which noteth his designation from God to be king, priest, and prophet. I do thus particularly open the terms, because I suppose the apostle's scope is to give us a sum of

the Christian doctrine concerning the person, natures, and offices of Jesus Christ, all which were one way or other impugned by the seducers of that age.

The points that might be drawn hence are many; for a taste take these:--

Obs. 1. That Jesus Christ is master and Lord, despo'tes kai` ku'rios, king of nations,' Jer. x. 7; and king of saints,' Rev. xv. 3; or, as the apostle in one place, Head over all things to the church,' Eph. i. 22. He is over all things, supreme and absolute; but the Church's head, from whom they receive all manner of influence. He hath a rod of iron to rule the nations, and a golden sceptre to guide the church. In the world he ruleth by his providences, in the church by his testimonies, Ps. xciii., per totum. In the world, the attribute manifested is power; in the church, grace. Well, then, here is comfort to God's people, your Lord is the world's master: Let the waves roar, the Lord reigneth,' Ps. xciii. You need not fear, he is not only Lord to protect you, but master of them that rise up against you. Again, who would not choose him to be a Lord, when, whether we will or no, he is our master, and bow the knee to him that will else break the back, and touch his golden sceptre lest we be broken with his rod of iron, and take hold of his strength by faith lest we feel it in displeasure? Lord, let me feel the efficacy of thy grace, rather than the power of thine anger!

Obs. 2. Observe again, that Christ is Lord and Jesus; he came to rule, and he came to save. I shall handle these two titles--(1.) Conjunctly; and then, (2.) Singly and apart.

1. Conjunctly: Let all Israel know that God hath made this Jesus, whom ye have crucified, Lord and Christ,' Acts ii. 36. It is usual to observe in Christ's style and title a mixture of words of power and words of goodness and mercy: see Isa. ix. 6, et alibi passim. Now for

what end? Partly to show that he is a desirable friend, and a dreadful adversary: partly to set forth the mystery of his person, in whom the two natures did meet: partly to show that he is not good out of impotency and weakness; if we pardon and do good it is out of need. God is strong enough to revenge, but gracious enough to save and pardon. Power maketh us cruel: Who findeth his enemy and slayeth him not?' If we forbear, it is out of policy, not out of pity. The sons of Zeruiah' may be too hard for us,' but Christ, who is the great Lord, he also is Jesus; he hath the greatest power, and the greatest mercy; mighty, but yet a Saviour. Partly to show how we should receive him; we should not only come to him for ease, but take his yoke, Mat. xi. 28, 29. Give him your hearts as well as your consciences; if Christ save, let not sin lord it. What a pitiful thing it is when men would have Christ to redeem them, and Satan to rule and govern them! Ou the'lomen touton basileusai, We will not have this man to reign over us,' Luke xix. 14. There the business sticks: The carnal mind is enmity to the law.' Rom. viii. Lusts cannot endure to hear of a restraint, and therefore we oppose most Christ's nomothetic power; like angry dogs we gnaw the chain. The language of every carnal heart is, Our lips are our own; who is lord over us?' Ps. xii. 4. To be controlled for every word, every thought, every action, we cannot endure it. Oh! consider Christ hath many enemies, but they are his chief enemies that do withstand his reigning: Luke xix. 27, Those mine enemies, that would not that I should reign over them,' &c.

2. Let us handle these two titles singly and apart.

[1.] He is Lord: Acts x. 36, Jesus Christ, he is Lord of all.' As he is God he hath the same glory with the Father; as mediator there is a dominion that results from his office; for so he is the heir of all things,' the head of all creatures, and king of the church, and at the

last day the judge of all men. But he is chiefly a Lord because of his heritage in the church; a Lord over his own people, who are given to him for a possession' by God the Father, Ps. ii. 8, and bought with his own blood,' Acts xx. 28; and taken into a marriage covenant with him, Eph. v. 25-27. And as Sarah called her husband lord, so must the church own Christ for Lord and husband. Well, then, let us acknowledge the dominion of Christ; let him be Lord alone in his own house; let us yield subjection and obedience to him; let us beware of depriving him of that honour to which he hath so good a right. You will say, Who are those that deny Christ his Lordship? I answer:--

(1.) They that will not hear his voice, that slight his calls. He inviteth them and prayeth them that they will look into their hearts, consider their eternal condition, but they quench the Spirit, smother light, resist all these motions; these will not hear Christ's voice. He entreateth, prayeth, that we will come and put our souls under his government; and we in effect say, We are lords, and will not come at thee,' Jer. ii. 31. We are well enough, and shall do well enough without any such care and strictness.

(2.) They that cannot endure his restraints: Jer. xxxi. 18, Thou art as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke.' They cannot endure to hear of denying their fashions, their lusts, their pleasures, their vain thoughts, when every thought and every desire must be under a law; so much time spent in duties, such gravity in the conversation, such awe in their speeches; they break off like a wanton heifer. Vain and licentious spirits will not be yoked and clogged thus: Mal. i. 14, What a weariness is it!' Sacrifice upon sacrifice! such waiting upon God! they cannot endure it. Man is compared to a wild ass's colt,' not only for grossness of conceit, but for untamedness and wildness, Job xi. 12. We would roam abroad without restraint.

(3.) They are given up to strong and inordinate desires of liberty; when men quarrel at duties rather than practise them, think it a kind of happiness to be free, and that there is no freedom but in sinning, and following the bent and sway of their own hearts, are all for breaking bands, and dissolving cords, Ps. ii. 4.

(4.) These are bewrayed by a proud contempt and obstinacy against instruction and reproof: Jer. v. 5, I will go to the great men and speak to them; but these have altogether burst the yoke, and broken the bands.' They had cast off all respect and obedience to God: Jer. xiii. 15, Hear, give ear, be not proud,' &c.; so Heb. xiii. 22, Suffer the words of exhortation,' &c. Some spirits are impatient, and recoil with the more violence upon a reproof, and storm and vex, which argueth much unsubjection of heart to Christ.

[2.] He is Jesus, which signifieth a Saviour. Now Christ is a Saviour positively as well as privately; he giveth us spiritual blessings, as well as freedom from misery; John iii. 17, that they should not perish, but have everlasting life.' Again he is a Saviour not only by way of deliverance, but by way of prevention; he doth not only break the snare, but keep our feet from falling; he is as a shepherd to lead the flock, as well as a physician to heal the diseased. We do not take notice of preventive mercies, and yet prevention is better than escape. Again, he is a Saviour by merit and by power; for he hath not only to do with God, but with Satan. God is to be satisfied, and Satan overcome; and therefore he rescueth us out of the hands of Satan, and redeemeth us out of the hands of God's justice. To rescue a condemned malefactor, and take him by force out of the executioner's hands, is not enough; the judge also must be satisfied, and pass a pardon, or the man is not safe: Christ hath pulled us out of the power of darkness,' Col. i. 13, and in him the Father is well pleased,' Mat. iii. 17. There

needeth also power to work upon our hearts, as well as merit to satisfy God. Before his exaltation he redeemed us, then he deserved it; and therefore it is said, We have salvation by his death,' 1 Thes. v. 9. After his exaltation he worketh it, and so we are saved by his life,' Rom. v. 10. So that living and dying he is ours, that living and dying we may be his: we have the power of his exaltation as well as the merit of his humiliation. Once more, he saveth us not only for awhile, but for ever; and therefore it is called an eternal salvation,' Heb. v. 9; not only from temporal misery, but from hell and damnation; not only the body is saved, but the soul; and the soul not only from hell, but the fear of hell, Heb. ii. 14, from the fear as well as the hurt, from despair and want of hope as well as from the misery itself. Yet, again, he saveth us not only from the evils after sin, but the evil of sin: Mat. i. 21, He shall save his people from their sins;' there is the chiefest part of his salvation. He doth not only save us in part, but saves us to the uttermost,' Heb. vii. 25. He giveth us life, and all things necessary to life. Well, then:--

First, Bless God for Jesus Christ, that he took the cure of our salvation into his own hands; he would not trust an angel, none was fit for it: Isa. lix., I looked and there was no Saviour, therefore mine own arm wrought out salvation.' There are poor creatures like to perish for want of a Saviour; I will go down and help them; as Jonah, when he saw the tempest, Cast me into the sea.' So when we had raised a tempest, Cast me in, saith Christ, Lo, I am come to do thy will.'

Secondly, Get an interest in Christ: Luke i. 47, My spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour,' Interest is the true ground of comfort and rejoicing. What must we do to get this interest? I answer:--

1. Reject all other Saviours: Acts iv. 12, There is salvation in no other.' Nothing could save Noah and his family but the ark; if they had

devised ships, they would not hold out against the deluge. Especially take heed of making Christ of self, setting up thy own merit, or thy own power; the one in effect renounceth his humiliation, the other his exaltation. Christ came to save that which was lost;' the sinking disciples cried out, Master, save us, we perish.' It is long ere God bringeth us to this: till you are lost, why should you make choice of a Saviour? Swimming is not a thing that can be practised ashore or on firm land: till we are brought into distress we will never look for a Saviour.

2. Be earnest with God for an interest, and for the manifestation of it: Ps. xxxv. 3, Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation.' When the soul hath chosen God, Lam. iii. 24, The Lord is my portion, saith my soul;' I will have no other Saviour, but I will desire the Lord to ratify it by his consent: I am thy salvation. 5 Those that would make use of Christ's salvation in a temporal way pressed on him, untiled the house to come at him; so should we force ourselves upon him by a holy boldness.

Obs. 3. Again, from the words observe, the Son of God was Christ, that he might be Lord and Jesus; anointed of the Father that he might accomplish our salvations. This anointing signifieth two things:--

1. The quality and kind of his office.

2. The authority upon which it was founded.

First, It noteth the nature of his offices. Under the Old Testament three sort of persons were anointed--kings, priests, and prophets, and all these relations doth Christ sustain to the church. Men that were to be saved lay under a threefold necessity--ignorance, distance from God, and inability to return to him. Suitably Christ a prophet to show us our misery, a priest to provide a remedy, a king to instate us in that remedy; therefore according to these three offices doth the scripture

use words in describing the benefits we have by Christ: John xiv. 6, I am the way, the truth, and the life.' Christ is the way as a priest, for by his oblation and intercession we have the boldness to come to God; the truth as a prophet, the life as a king: take life either for the royal donatives of grace or glory. So 1 Cor. i. 30, He is made to use wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.' We are ignorant foolish creatures, therefore Christ is made to us wisdom as a prophet; we are guilty creatures, and therefore righteousness as a priest; sinful creatures, therefore sanctification; miserable creatures, liable to death and hell, therefore redemption, and both these as a king. It was necessary that the way of our salvation should be opened, effected, and applied; therefore did Christ first come from heaven as a prophet to preach the gospel; and then offer up himself through the eternal Spirit as a priest; and, last of all, seize upon the mediatorial throne as king of the church. Well, then, if our blindness and ignorance troubleth us, let us make use of Christ's prophetical office, that he may teach us the whole counsel of God; if we are haunted by troubles, and the accusations of our own conscience, let us sprinkle our hearts with the blood of our high priest, that they may be pacified; if we have any desire to be granted, let us make use of his intercession; if we be discouraged by our own weakness, and the power of our spiritual enemies, let us run for protection to our king, through whom the saints are more than conquerors.

Secondly, It noteth the authority upon which his office is founded; he was anointed thereto by God the Father, who in the work of redemption is represented as the offended party and supreme judge; and so it is a great comfort to us that Christ is a mediator of God's choosing. When Moses interposed of his own accord, he was refused: Blot me out of thy book;' No, saith the Lord, the soul that sinneth, him will I blot out

of my book.' But now Jesus Christ took not this honour upon him, but was called of God thereunto; it was the will of the Father: so that when we come to God, though we cannot say, He is mine, yet we can say, Lord, he is thine; a Saviour of thy setting up, thou hast authorised him, and wilt own thine own way, &c.

Obs. 4. Once more, observe, which indeed is a point that lieth full in the eye of the text, that Jesus Christ, the master of the world and Lord of the church, is true God. For it is said here, denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. It would seem a strange thing that I should go about to prove the Godhead of Christ, were not blasphemy grown so common, and appearing abroad with so bold a forehead. Heretofore it was a grievous abomination to the children of God when such a thought rushed into their minds; but now some promote it as a settled opinion. It is Satan's policy to loosen a corner stone, though he cannot wholly pull it out; he striveth all that he can to make the main articles of religion seem at least questionable. But Christians, be not shaken in mind; the foundation of the Lord standeth sure. I confess I should wholly omit such disputes; in fundamental articles, we should not allow a scruple: Thou shalt not inquire after their gods,' Deut. xii. 30. But when such conceits are not only satanical injections, but men's settled opinions, it is good to establish the heart in such principles as this is. That Christ is God appeareth by express scripture, where he is called the true God,' 1 John v. 20; the great God,' Titus ii, 13, to show that he is not a God inferior to the Father, but equal in power and glory, and that not by courtesy and grant, but by nature. So he is called the mighty God, the everlasting Father,' Isa. ix. 6, and God over all.' Rom. ix. 5; proofs so evident and pregnant that they need no illustration. And that he is a God equal to the Father appeareth also by express texts of scripture: Phil. ii.

6, He was in the form of God, and thought it no robbery to be equal with God;' and Col. ii. 9, In him dwelleth the fulness of the Godhead bodily.' The saints are made partakers of the divine nature,' 2 Peter i. 4, but in him the whole Godhead dwelt personally, and all this was no usurpation of another's right. The Jews would have stoned him because he said God was his father, making himself equal with God;' therefore he meant it not in an ordinary sense, and indeed if he be a God, he is a God by nature, for God will not give his glory to another.' Again, God he must needs be, if you consider the work he ought to do. The work of the mediator could be dispatched by no inferior agent. As prophet, he was to be greater than all other prophets and apostles; for the great doctor of the church ought to be authentic, a lawgiver from whose sentence there is no ap peal: A lord in his own house,' Heb. iii. 6; one to whom Moses was but a servant, for to him he gave the law, Heb. xii. 26. One that is to be a fountain of wisdom to all the elect, 1 Cor. i. 30; one that must not only teach, but give eyes to see, and ears to hear, and a heart to learn. Consider him as a king; a finite power cannot break the force of enemies, pour out the Spirit, raise the dead, bestow grace and glory, and become an original fountain of life to all the elect. All these things are proper to God, the glory which he will not give to another. Consider him as a priest; and there are two acts, oblation and intercession, and still you will find that he must be God. For his oblation, he must be one that could offer up himself, Heb. ix. 14, and therefore must have power' over his own life, John x. 28, to lay it down and take it up;' which no creature hath. And he must offer himself one for all,' 2 Cor. v. 15; the person that suffered was to be infinite, as good and better than all theirs that should have suffered; as they said to David, thou art better than a thousand of us;' and this suffering was to be but

once. Now, the wages of sin are eternal death; some thing there must be to compensate the eternity of the punishment, and nothing could counterpoise eternity but the infiniteness and excellency of Christ's person, as a payment in gold taketh up less room than a payment in silver, but the value is as much. It was necessary that he should overcome the punishment, for if we were always suffering, we could have no assurance that God were satisfied. And the end was to expiate sin; nothing but an infinite good could remedy so great an evil. The person wronged is infinite, so is the person suffering. And then his death was not only to be a ransom, but a price; not only anti'lutron, but anta'llagma. A surety to an ordinary creditor payeth the debt, and freeth the debtor from bonds. Christ was to bring us into grace and favour with God, and to merit heaven for us. Now for the other act of his priesthood, his intercession: so he was to know our persons and our wants and necessities, as the high priest had the names of the twelve tribes on his breast and shoulders, Exod. xxviii. 12, 29. And then he is to negotiate with God in the behalf of all believers, and to dispatch blessings suitable to their state: and who can do this but God, who knoweth the heart and trieth the reins? In short, to be a fit intercessor for all the elect, he is to know our needs, thoughts, sins, prayers, desires, purposes, and to wait on our business day and night, that wrath may not break out upon us; so that his work as mediator showeth him to be God.

Uses. Well, then, we learn hence:--

1. That Christ is a proper object for faith. Faith is built on God, 1 Peter i. 21, and Christ is God; and therefore his merit was sufficient to redeem the church, which is therefore said to be purchased by the blood of God,' Acts xx. 28. This maketh him able to sanctify us, and purge us, for his blood was offered through the eternal Spirit,' Heb.

ix. 14. As God he knoweth our wants; for as to his divine nature he knoweth all things; and then he hath a human nature that hath had experience of them. He is able, as God, to give in the supplies of the Spirit, to save to the uttermost, Heb. vii. 25. God manifested in our flesh is a firm basis for faith and comfort.

2. Since he was God by nature, let us observe the love of Christ in becoming man. Men show their love to one another when they hang their picture about their neck. What did Christ when he took our nature? To see the great God in the form of a servant, or hanging upon the cross, how wonderful! God manifested in our flesh' is a mystery fit for the speculation of angels, 1 Tim. iii. 16, with 1 Peter, i. 11; it would have seemed a blasphemy for us to have thought it, to have desired it. Among the friars, they count it a mighty honour done to their order if a great prince, when he is weary of the world, cometh among them, and taketh their habit, and dieth in their habit. Certainly it is a mighty honour to mankind that Christ took our nature, and died in our nature, and that he was made sin,' made man,' made a curse.' Let us desire to be made partakers of his nature, as he was of ours. This is our preferment, to be partakers of the divine nature,' 2 Peter i. 4, as this was his abasement. The sun of righteousness went backward, there was the miracle; and let us use ourselves more honourably for the time to come, that we may not defile that nature which the Son of God assumed.

3. It is an invitation to press us to come to Christ, and by Christ to God. The great work of the ministers is like that of Eliezer, Abraham's servant, to seek a match for our master's son. Our way to win you is to tell you what he is; he is God-man in one person; he is man, that you may not be afraid of him; God, that he may be sufficient to do you good;' the Lord of lords,' King of kings,' the heir of all things,' the

Saviour of the world;' this is your beloved, ye daughters of Jerusalem.' He knoweth your wants, is able to supply them, though you are unworthy. Come, he needeth no portion with you; we can bring nothing to him, he hath enough in himself; as Esther, the poor virgin, had garments out of the king's wardrobe, Esther ii. 12, and the perfumes and odours given her on the king's cost. Therefore come to him; it is danger to neglect him: See that ye refuse not him that speaketh from heaven,' Heb. xii. 25. It is God wooeth you; he will take you with nothing, he is all-sufficient; you bringing him nothing but all-necessity, he will protect you, maintain you, give you a dowry as large as heart can wish. Therefore leave not till you come to I am my beloved's, and he is mine.'

Obs. 5. I come now to the word implying their guilt, arnou'menoi, denying. Observe, that it is a horrible impiety to deny the Lord Jesus; when he would make these seducers odious, he giveth them, this character. Now Christ is many ways denied. I shall refer them to two heads--in opinion and practice.

1. In opinion: so Christ is denied when men deny his natures or offices. (1.) His natures, his deity or humanity,--as those ancient and wicked heretics, Ebion and Cerinthus; and that is the reason why John beginneth his Gospel (which was last written) with a description of his Godhead, and is so zealous against them in his epistles; as also Jude and Peter. Ebion, Cerinthus, and Carpocrates, and others, held he was begotten as others are, by the help of a man. Manes held the Son of God to be a part of his Father's substance. Saturnius, Basilides, Cordion, with others, denied the humanity of Christ, saying he only appeared in the shape of a man. Samosatanus held God was not otherwise in Christ than in the prophets. Eutyches held there was in Christ but one nature, which was made up of the commixture of his flesh with his divinity, as

water is mixed with wine. Nestorius would give him two personalities, because he had two natures. The Marcionites affirmed Christ suffered not really, but in show. Thus you see how busy the devil hath been, and always is, about this main article. (2.) His offices of king, priest, and prophet have been denied by none, as I remember, but yet often made void and of none effect. Antichristianism is perfectly the evacuating of Christ's offices. The Papists set up head against head, which is the spirit of antichristianism. They make void his priestly office by indulgences, purgatory, doctrine of merit; his prophetical office by doctrines of men and unwritten traditions. So Socinians make void his priesthood by denying his satisfaction; and Papists make void the other act of his priesthood by setting up mediators of intercession, &c.

2. Christ is denied in practice; and so--(1.) By apostasy and total revolt from him: Mat. x. 33, Whosoever shall deny me before men,' &c. None sin as apostates do; for they do as it were, after trial, and upon deliberate judgment, acknowledge the devil the better master; they first forsook Satan, and then came to Christ, and then they go back again from Christ to Satan; and so do, as it were, tell the world, that with him is the best service; and therefore it were better they had never known the way of righteousness,' &c., 2 Peter ii. 21. (2.) By not professing Christ in evil times, for not to profess is to deny: see Mat. x. 32, 33, and Mark viii. 38, in an age when men prove disloyal in the duty of the covenant, called there an adulterous generation.' Some are ashamed for fear of disgrace, as well as afraid for fear of danger to own Christ, and the ways best pleasing to him; this is to deny him. (3.) Men deny Christ when they profess him, and walk unworthily and dishonourably to their profession. Actions are the best image of men's thoughts. Now their actions give their profession the lie: Titus, i. 16, They profess they know God, and in works they deny him.' So 1 Tim.

v. 8, If any provide not for his own house, he hath denied the faith;' that is, done an act incompatible with the Christian faith, of which he maketh profession; which is interpretativè--a denying the faith. For the more clear opening of this, consider these propositions:--

[1.] An empty profession of Christ is not enough; now Christ is everywhere received, it is easy to profess his name. To be a Christian in heart and conscience was far more easy to them in the primitive times than to be so in name and profession, the powers of the world being against that way; whereas the difficulty on our part lieth in being Christians in heart: it is no disgrace now to be a Christian outwardly; that opposition and scorn which was then cast upon Christianity would now be cast upon Judaism, or Turcism, or Paganism. The winds blow out of another corner, and that which was their discouragement may be our motive, to wit, the countenance of civil powers; all advantages lie this way. If in Christ's time they followed him for the loaves, John vi. 26, now they may much more. Quandoquidem panis Christi jam pinguis factus est, saith Gilbert; [104] tractatur in conciliis, disceptatur in judiciis, disputatur in scholis, cantatur in ecclesiis, quaestuosa res est nomen Christi--the world is well altered since the first flight of Christianity abroad; the kings and princes and wise men of the world were then against it, everywhere was it hooted at as a novel and improbable doctrine; but since, by long prescription of time, it hath gotten esteem in the world, and is made the public profession of nations, and kings and princes have brought their glory into the church, now Christ is handled in councils, disputed of in the schools, and preached of in the assemblies, so that the general profession of Christianity is a matter of no thanks. It is easy to be good where there is nothing to draw us to the contrary; and therefore, when Christ cometh to judgment, paganism and loose

profession of Christianity shall fare alike; for loose Christians are but pagans under a Christian name; see Jer. ix. 25, 26, The days shall come that I will punish all them that are uncircumcised with them that are circumcised; Egypt, and Judah, and Edom, and the children of Ammon and Moab; for these nations are uncircumcised in flesh, and the house of Israel are uncircumcised in heart.' It is no advantage to bear God's mark in our bodies, and to have no fruit of it in our souls; this is but to clothe ourselves with the leaves of the vine without partaking the sap. What difference is there between those who, in a loose Christian profession, are addicted to luxury, wantonness, quarrel ling, prodigious lusts, and the votaries or worshippers of Mars, Venus, Bacchus, and Priapus? Only the one appear in their own colours, and show what they are, and the other, though they are as low and brutish in their practices, pretend to a higher name, even to the sacred and excellent name of Christians. Alas! your circumcision shall be reckoned uncircumcision.' Rom. ii. 25, when you have not the fruit of it.

[2.] Profession of Christianity without answerable practice maketh us in worse case than a heathen that is ignorant of Christ and salvation by him; see 1 Tim. v. 8, He is worse than an infidel,' Poor pagans are not so well enlightened, instructed, and acquainted with such rich and glorious mercy, with the great things of eternity,' with the assistances of God the Spirit; they have not such rules as we have, nor such advantages as we have, nor such obligations as we have, nor such encouragements as we have. If a man on horseback cometh slower than a man on foot, we blame him the more, because he had more help. So are carnal Christians in worse case than the heathen, because God may justly expect more from them. To be brought up in a prince's court, and to be still of rude and servile conditions, is worse in them than in those that follow the plough all days of their lives. So to be trained

up in the courts of Christ, and to come short of the heathens in morality and strictness of conversation, it will be worse taken of us than of those that never heard of Christ. The more we profess the truth the more we condemn ourselves in our evil practices, and therefore must needs be worse than heathens; for we practise that by voluntary choice and perverse inclination which they practise by education, they know little better; so that the more excellent the religion is which we profess, the more vile and base is our disobedience; for our profession will be a sore witness against us, that we knew better and had encouragements to do better; we justify the heathen, but we condemn ourselves, as Israel justified Sodom, Ezek. xvi. 51, but by her profession so much the more disproved her own carriage, see ver. 63. Time will come when you will wish you had never known the way of righteousness;' and as Job cursed the day of his birth, so will you the memory of that day wherein you were added to the church.

[3.] Profession accompanied with some rash and fond affection to Christ is not enough to acquit us from denying him. Many in a heat and humour will be ready to die for their God, and yet deny him ordinarily in their lives. As a quarrelling ruffian will stand up for the honour of his father, who yet, by his debauched courses, is the very grief of his heart; it may be he wisheth his death to enjoy the inheritance, yet if any other should speak a disgraceful word of him, he is up in arms presently, and ready to fight with him. So some men pretend much affection to their religion, and are ready to stab him that shall question it, or to venture their own lives in the quarrel, and yet none do this religion so great a despite and dishonour as they do themselves by their ungodly conversations. The apostle supposeth that some may give their bodies to be burned that have not charity, 1 Cor. xiii. 3, for all this ado is not for their religion, but their humour. If their

religion were rightly understood they would not endure it, because it altogether disproveth such practices as they delight in; and all that they do is no more than they would do for an idol, if they were born there where idols are worshipped. The blasphemies of a pagan or an open enemy to religion do not touch Christ so near in point of honour as the scandalous behaviour of a Christian; when Pagans declaim against him, it is but the malice of an enemy. Dogs will bark, it is their kind; but your disobedience to his laws and unsuitable carriages doth far more dishonour, and represent him as an ulcerous Christ to the world; because you pretend so much affection to him, and can live in such a fashion, you would be taken for his greatest friends, and so in effect you make the world believe that he doth approve your doings.

[4.] Christ may be denied, though there be a stricter profession of his name, and some faint love and relish of his sweetness. Besides the loose national profession of Christianity which God, in a wise providence, ordaineth for the greater safety and preservation of his church, there may be a strict personal profession, taken up from inward conviction, and some taste and feeling, and yet Christ may be denied for all this, as some that had tasted the good word,' turned aside to the world, and so are said to crucify him' rather than to profess him, Heb. vi. 4-6. The apostle intendeth some Hebrews that did mix Moses with Christ and Judaism to save their goods. So elsewhere he speaketh of some that had a form of godliness, but denied the power thereof,' 2 Tim. iii. 5; by the form, meaning the strictest garb of religion then in fashion. This is to deny Christ, when we deny the virtue and power of that religion which he hath established, and will not suffer it to enter upon our hearts.

[5.] The means to discover false profession is to observe how we take it up, and how we carry it on; whether we embrace it upon undue

grounds, or match it with unconsonant practices.

(1.) We embrace it upon undue grounds if we take it up merely upon tradition, without a sight of that distinct worth and excellency which is in our religion, for then our religion is but a happy mistake, the stumbling of blind zeal upon a good object; and all the difference between you and pagans is but the advantage of your birth and education. Standing upon a higher ground doth not make a man taller than another of the same growth and stature that standeth lower; their stature is the same, though their standing be not the same. So you are no better than pagans, only you have the advantage of being born within the pale, and in such a country where the Christian religion is professed. You do according to the trade of Israel, 2 Chron. xvii. 4, and live kat' aiona, as the fashion of your country will carry it, Eph. ii. 2; and as beasts follow the track, so you take up that religion which is entailed upon you.

(2.) If we match it with unsuitable practices. These may be known, if we do consider what is most excellent in the Christian religion. Elsewhere [105] I have showed that the glory of the Christian religion lieth in three things--in excellency of rewards, purity of precepts, and sureness of principles of trust.

First, In the fulness of the reward, which is the eternal enjoyment of God in Christ; therefore they that do not make it their first and chief care to seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness,' Mat. vi. 33, that are like swine, in preferring the swill of carnal pleasures before communion with God, or, in the scripture expression, Love pleasures more than God,' or prefer the profits of the world before everlasting happiness, they whose lives are full of epicurism, atheism, worldliness, it is not a pin to those whether they be pagans or Christians; for, acting thus heathenishly, thus brutishly, they do but

pollute that sacred and worthy name.

Secondly, The perfection of the precepts, which require a full conformity of the whole man to the will of God. More particularly, Christian precepts are remarkable for purity and charity: for purity, and therefore revellings and banquetings and chambering' are made to be customs of the Gentiles, 1 Peter iv. 3, things abhorrent from the Christian religion; they that are yokeless, and live according to the swing of their own lusts, or else that only fashion the outward man, make no conscience of thoughts, lusts, &c.; they do not live as Christians. For charity: nothing is more pressed than giving; [106] it was Christ's maxim It is better to give than to receive,' Acts xx. 35. And also forgiving: one great strain of his sermon is love to enemies, Mat. v. 43-48. Christ, when he brought from heaven the discovery of such a strange love from God to man, would settle a wonderful love on earth between man and man.

Thirdly, For sureness of principles of trust; the whole scripture aimeth at this, to settle a trust in God, and therefore it discovereth so much of God's mercy, of his particular providence, of the contrivance of salvation in and by Christ; so that to be without hope,' is to be like a Gentile, for they are described to be men without hope,' 1 Thes. iv. 13; and carking and distrustful care is made the sin of the Gentiles, Mat. vi. 31, 32: this kind of solicitude is for them that know not God, or deny his providence over particular things.

Well, then, take heed of denying Christ; it is a heavy sin, it cost Peter bitter sorrow, Mat. xxvi. 75. Will you deny Christ that bought you'? 2 Peter ii. 1. Now they deny Christ, whose hopes and comforts are only in this world; Christ is not their God, but their belly, Phil. iii. 19. Libertines are not disciples of Christ, but votaries of Priapus. Merciless and revengeful men do condemn that religion which

they do profess. In short, they do not only deny Christ that question his natures or make void his offices, but they that despise his laws, when they do not walk answerably, or walk contrary.

[92] Multiplicatis fidei populis fides imminuta est, et crescentibus filiis mater aegrotat, quantum copiae accessit, tantum disciplinae recessit, inaudito genere processus et recessus, crescens simul et decrescens.'--Salvian de Gubernat.

[93] Ecclesia ex intentione fideles tantum colligit, et si nosset impios et incredulos, eos aut nunquam admitteret, aut casu admissos excluderet.'--Bellar. de Eccl., vi. c. 10.

[94] Sic Sisinnius Novatianorum Episcopus; apud Vedelium in Prud. veteris Ecclesiae in Prol. c. 3, 4.

[95] Faustus Rhegiensis dum captiose videri vellet pugnare contra Pelagianos, compertus fuit Pelagio favens.--Isiodor.

[96] See the reverend and learned Dr Usher's Answer to the Jesuit's Challenge.

[97] Except these,' i.e., the sailors.--ED.

[98] Heu primae scelerum causae mortalibus aegris,
Naturam nescire Dei.'

[99] Nolentes audire quod auditum damnare non possunt,' &c.--Tertul. in Apol.

[100] Virtutes et vitia non officiis distinguuntur sed finibus.'

[101] Adamus Contzenius, in Mat. cap. 24.

[102] The order of the verses is the reverse of that stated.--ED.

[103] Qu. power'?--ED.

[104] Gilbert in Cant.

[105] See my comment on James i. 18.

[106] Therefore a merciless disposition is made a denying the faith, 1 Tim. v. 8.

Ver. 5. I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew

this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterwards destroyed them that believed not.

We have done with the preface. I come now to the examples by which the apostle proveth the danger of defection from the faith. The first is taken from the murmuring Israelites; the second from the apostate angels; the third from the beastly Sodomites. That you may see how apposite and apt for the apostle's purpose these instances are, I shall first insist upon some general observations.

Obs. 1. First observe that God's ancient judgments were ordained to be our warnings and examples. The Bible is nothing but a book of precedents, wherein the Lord would give the world a document or copy of his providence: All these things are happened to them for examples,' 1 Cor. x. 11. When we blow off the dust from these old experiences, we may read much of the counsel of God in them; their destruction should be our caution. His justice is the same that ever it was, and his power is the same, his vigour is not abated with years: God is but one,' Gal. iii. 20; that is, always the same, without change and variation, as ready to take vengeance of the transgressors of the law as of old; for that is the point there discussed. So 2 Tim. ii. 13, He abideth faithful; he cannot deny himself.' In all the changes of the world, God is not changed, but is where he was at first. Surely we should tremble more when we consider the examples of those that have felt his justice; for God keepeth a proportion in all his dispensations. If he were strict, and holy, and just, then he is strict, and holy, and just now.

He that struck Ananias and Sapphira dead in the place for a lie, that made Zacharias dumb for unbelief, that kept Moses out of the land of

promise for a few unadvised words, that turned Lot's wife into a pillar of salt for looking back, is the same God still, not a jot altered: his judgments may be more spiritual, but then more terrible.

Again, answerable practices make us partakers of their guilt, and therefore involve us in their punishment. Imitation is an evidence of approbation. A man may have more sins charged upon him than those committed in his own person; you are partakers of their evil deeds that lived before you, if you do as they did. It may be the memory of those that formerly fell under the weight of God's displeasure is execrable to you, yet your walking in the same course is a sign that you like their practices, and therefore you must expect their judgments with advantage and usury: Mat. xxiii. 35, That upon you may come all the righteous blood that was shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, the son of Barachiah, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.' Why upon them? and how did they slay him? No doubt the memory of Cain was accursed among the Jews, but they walked in the way of Cain,' and so were to receive Cain's judgment with advantage. No doubt the memory of the murderers of Zechariah the prophet was hateful to them, but they continued prophet-killing and prophet-hating, and therefore did implicitly approve his murder, and so are said to slay him. Jude 11, it is said, These perished in the gainsaying of Korah.' How can that be, when they were not as yet born? These seducers lived long after, but following them in their sin, in their ruin they had a sure pledge of their own destruction. When we see others fall into a deep pit, and yet will adventure the same way, as we sin the worse, so our judgment will be the greater.

Uses. Well, then, let us make every instance of the word a warning, and apply it for our use; it is excellent when we read the scriptures with a spirit of application. In the miscarriage of others we have

experience at a cheap rate; and in their misery we have as sure a proof of the evil of sin, though not as costly, as if we had felt it ourselves.

Again, when wicked men flourish, be not dismayed. How hath God judged sinners of like kind? What say your scripture precedents? I went into the sanctuary; there I understood their end,' Ps. lxxiii. 17.

Again, it showeth how vain their conceit is, that God will not deal so severely with us if we continue in our sins as he hath done with others in former times when the scriptures were written. God's judgments, I confess, are more spiritual, but every way as severe to them that continue in their sins; heretofore they were smitten with death, now with deadness. Nadab and Abihu were quickly dispatched for their unhallowed approaches to God in worship, Lev. x. 3, &c.; many come now that do not sanctify God in their hearts: their judgment is more spiritual, the ordinances which should quicken, harden them. Bears devoured the children that mocked the prophet, 2 Kings ii. 23-25: many sit taunting by the walls that are not torn in pieces by bears, but they are posting to hell apace; tarry but a little while, and God will tear them in pieces, and there shall be none to deliver,' Ps. 1. Korah, Dathan, and Abiram were swallowed up quick, Num. xvi.; the earth cleaves to receive them that made a cleft in the congregation: many act as tumultuously as they, and no doubt their day is coming. Lot's wife, whose heart hankered after her possessions, was turned into a pillar of salt for looking back, Gen. xix. They that revert, and, after they are embarked with Christ, run ashore again as soon as they see a storm a-coming, shall have their reward in due time.

Obs. 2. The next thing which I observe in these instances is, the impartiality of divine justice; for in all the examples brought, there are some circumstances upon which others would expect an exemption from

wrath; as the interest of the Israelites, they were God's own people; the dignity of the angels, they were as it were fellows of God and courtiers of heaven; the beauty and excellency of the country of Sodom: and in all the instances ye may observe the judgments fell on multitudes and societies, or collective bodies. All the murmuring Israelites, all the apostate angels, all the inhabitants of the four cities. Observe then--(1.) That no outward privilege can avail us in the day of wrath, and so God's justice knoweth no relations. He spared not Christ.' Rom. viii. 32; he spared not the angels,' 2 Peter ii. 4; he spared not his people of Israel, &c. (2.) None have a privilege to sin, and therefore none are exempted from punishment; the law includeth all, the son, the servant, them that sit on the throne, and those that grind at the mill, none have a license from heaven and a privilege to sin above others. (3.) Wicked men do not spare God, and therefore God doth not spare them. They abuse his justice, his mercy; they spare not his glory, his laws; and as they are impartial in sinning, no restraints withhold them, so God is impartial in punishing.

Uses. Lean not then upon these reeds. When wrath maketh inquisition for sinners, outward privileges are of no use; it is happy for them alone that are found in Christ,' Phil. iii. The avenger of blood had nothing to do with the manslayer in the city of refuge; when God is about to strike, none but Christ can hold the blow. See the vanity of other things. (1.) Outward profession is nothing, your circumcision becometh uncircumcision.' God disclaimeth interest in a sinful people: Thy people which thou hast brought out of the land of Egypt,' saith God to Moses, when they had corrupted themselves, in scorn and disdain, Exod. xxxii. 7. Thy people; he will not own them for his sheep, Deut. xxxii. 5. (2.) No dignity can exempt us; the angels were cast down to places of darkness. Dignity doth not lessen but aggravate sin; where much is

given, much is owed, and much will be required: Tophet is prepared for kings, for princes is it prepared.' (3.) Not outward excellency, as the pleasant land of Sodom. The disciples thought the goodly buildings of the temple would move Christ to pity, Luke xxi. 5, 6, but Christ telleth them, not one stone should be left upon another.' Saul was checked for sparing the best. Justice is not dazzled with outward splendour. The Lord threateneth to punish the dainty daughters of Zion with a scab,' Isa. iii. 17, &c. (4.) Not any society or multitudes of men. He spared not the old world,' 2 Peter ii. 5. No leagues and combinations can maintain your cause against God: Though the wicked go hand in hand, they shall not escape unpunished,' Prov. xi. 21. Briars and thorns may be intricated, and enfolded one within another, but when a devouring flame cometh amongst them, they do not hinder but increase the burning. Universal evils are above man's punishment, but not God's. There is no safety in following a multitude to do evil.' So that nothing will serve as a fit screen to interpose between wrath and you, but only Christ.

Obs. 3. I observe that, in all these instances there was some preceding mercy more or less. The angels had the dignity of their nature; the Israelites had the testimony of God's presence, and were delivered out of Egypt; the Sodomites had eternal [107] blessings, and the preaching of Lot, Gen. xix. 9. It is God's usual course to give a people a taste of his mercy ere he discover the power of his anger. Judgment is his last work: there is some mercy abused before it cometh, which doth abundantly clear God in the judgments that come upon the sons of men. Their ruin may be sad, but never undeserved. God hath not left himself without a witness,' but we are left without excuse.'

Obs. 4. Once more I observe, that in all these instances God had still a care to put a distinction between the just and the unjust; the race

of Israel was not destroyed, but only them that believed not.' The good angels were preserved, the bad only fell from their first estate. Sodom perished in the flames, but Lot escaped. When the multitude is so corrupt, that we know not how they shall be punished and the rest preserved, let us think of these instances, let us refer it to God: He knoweth,' &c., 2 Peter ii. 9.

I come now to the words; in which you have a preface, and the first instance of God's judgment, which was on the unbelieving Israelites. In the preface you may take notice of his purpose, I will put you in remembrance; his insinuation, though ye once know this.

I begin with the first part, his purpose, I will put you in remembrance. From thence observe:--

Obs. 1, That it is a great part of a minister's duty to be a remembrancer. We are remembrancers in a double sense:--(1.) From the people to God, to put God in mind of his people's wants; so it is said, Isa. lxii. 6, Ye that are the Lord's remembrancers.' Christ is the church's advocate, but we are the church's solicitors, to represent the sad condition of the church to God. (2.) From God to the people; and so we are to put them in mind of the being of God, the riches of his grace, the necessity of obedience, the preciousness of their souls, the many dangers that lie in their way to heaven, &c. These are standing dishes at Christ's table. That this is a great part of our office appeareth by those places:--1 Tim. iv. 6, If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ.' And Paul, speaking of his apostleship, saith, Rom. xv. 15, As one that putteth you in remembrance, through the grace given to me;' see 2 Tim. ii. 14; Titus iii. 1; 2 Peter i. 12-14; iii. 1. So there are two psalms that bear that title, A Psalm of David to bring to remembrance, Ps. xxxviii. and lxx. The great use of sacraments is to

put us in remembrance of Christ, 1 Cor. xi. 24. Yea, one great employment of the Spirit is to bring things to our remembrance,' John xiv. 26; all which intimateth (1st.) Our forgetfulness and incogitancy. Truths formerly understood are soon forgotten, or not duly considered and kept in the view of conscience. (2d.) The benefit of a good memory. A bad memory is the cause of all mischief, but a lively remembrance of truth keepeth the mind in a good frame. (3d.) That however it be with natural, yet spiritual knowledge is a reminiscence, or reviving the seeds infused in the new creation, 1 Cor. xv. 2; Heb. xii. 5. (4th.) That a minister dischargeth his duty when he teacheth his people things vulgar and already known, as well as those which are rare and less known: if he be but a remembrancer it is enough; we are to bring forth things both new and old.' We count him a wanton prodigal that only furnisheth his table with rarities, neglecting wholesome meats because they are usual. (5th.) The necessity of a standing ministry, if not to instruct, yet to keep things in remembrance. Because the most necessary truths are few and soon learned, men presently begin to think they know as much as can be taught them, and so neglect ordinances; whereas one great use of the ministry is to keep truths fresh and savoury in the thoughts and memory. The heathen soon lost the knowledge of God, because they were without a public monitor that might keep this knowledge still on foot. The sound of the trumpet infuseth a new courage, so doth every sermon beget new affections, though we knew the truths delivered before. Coals will die without continual blowing; so will graces languish without often warnings and admonitions.

The next thing in the preface is the insinuation, though ye once knew this. That word once needeth to be explained. His meaning is not that formerly they had known, but now forgotten it; neither is once to be referred to upomnesai, as if the sense were, I will once put you in

remembrance; but by once is meant once for all; that is, ye have certainly and irrecoverably received this as a truth. This clause will yield us these notes.

Obs. 2. That it is the duty of every Christian to be acquainted with the scriptures; the apostle presumeth it of these Christians to whom he wrote. Now this is necessary in regard of ourselves, that we may know the solid grounds of our own comfort; every man would look over his charter: Search the scriptures, for in them ye think to have eternal life,' John v. 39. Particular and distinct scriptures are a great advantage in temptations. Sic scriptum est is Christ's own argument against Satan, Mat. iv. No Christians so unsettled in point of comfort or opinion as those that are unskilful in the word,' Heb. v. 13. In regard of others, it is necessary that we may discharge our duty to them; Let the word dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another,' &c., Col. iii. 16. None but full vessels will run over, Job xxxii. 18. Ignorant Christians are barren and sapless in discourse; private Christians must be full of knowledge;' not only to have knowledge enough to bring themselves to heaven, but to admonish others,' see Rom. xv. 14. Well, then, do not put off this care to others, as if it were proper only to scholars and men of a public calling; this is every man's work that hath a soul to be saved. It is Popish ignorance to be contented with an implicit belief; you may best trust your own eyes. When the sun shineth, every man openeth his windows to let it in. We busy ourselves in other books, why not in the word? Austin was pleased with Tully's Hortensius, but he cast it away because he could not find the name of Christ there. It is the description of a godly man, His delight is in the law of God, and in his law doth he exercise himself day and night,' Ps. i. 2. These are the chaste delights of a child of God, not in playbooks and idle son

nets; how many sacrilegious hours do most spend in these trifles! Good books should not keep us from the scriptures; water is sweetest in the fountain. Luther professeth that he could wish all his books forgotten and utterly laid aside, rather than that they should keep men from reading the scriptures themselves. [108] Christians, study the word more, that you may have promises, doctrines, examples ready and more familiar with you; to be ignorant in a knowing age is an argument of much negligence, Heb. v. 14. Now religion is made every one's discourse, will you alone be a stranger in Israel? As the many helps call upon us to study the word more, so the many errors which are abroad: all error cometh from unskilfulness in the scriptures: Mat. xxii. 29, Ye err, not knowing the scriptures;' in the dark a man may soon lose his way.

To cure this mischief, let me press you:--

1. To read the scriptures in your families; set up this ordinance among other parts of worship there--it is a family exercise--that your children may be trained up in them, 2 Tim. iii. 15. It is a good closet exercise for your own private instruction, none of you are in too high a form; the prophets searched them diligently,' 1 Peter i. 11, 12.

2. Read them with profit, so as you may understand them, and apply the doctrines and examples you meet with there. Ask thy soul, Understandest thou what thou readest?' Acts viii. 30, or as Paul, Rom. viii. 31, What shall we say to these things?' The scriptures are not to be read for delight, but for spiritual profit and use.

3. In cases of difficulty use all holy means; pray to God, the Spirit is the best interpreter; pray before, pray after, as you do for food. If God answer not at first, Cry for knowledge, lift up thy voice for understanding.' Call in the helps which God hath given, many private helps of commentaries; but above all, despise not prophesying.' Consult

with the officers and guides of the church, Eph. iv. 14, Mal. ii. 7.

Obs. 3. Observe again, that those truths which we understand already, they had need be pressed again, and revived upon us; see 1 John ii. 21. Our knowledge is but weak, the eye of the mind is opened by degrees; our memories are weak, and commands must be repeated to a forgetful servant; our affections are slow, not easily wrought up to the love of good things. When the wedge will not enter with one blow, we follow it home with blow upon blow. Well, then, we say--(1.) Repetitions are lawful for you; it is a sure thing, Phil. iii. 1. Christ in the Gospels, and Paul in the Epistles, do often repeat the same passages. Till you be affected with them we must inculcate necessary principles again and again: God speaketh once, yea, twice, when men regard it not,' Job xxxiii. 14. Consider men are dull to conceive, slow of heart to believe.' The way to pierce the hard stone is by often dropping: apt to forget heavenly truths: leaky vessels must be filled again, Heb. ii. 1. We must repeat, to make shame more stirring: Peter was troubled when Christ said the third time, Lovest thou me?' John xxi. 17. Let this which hath been said prevent censure; look upon it as a providence when the same truth or sermon is presented again: Surely I have not meditated enough of this truth, I am not enough affected with it, therefore the Lord hath again brought it to my thoughts, or there is some new temptation that I shall meet with, that I may find the need of this old truth, &c. (2.) That it is a spiritual disease, a surfeit of manna, when men must still be fed with new things; no truths are too plain for our mouths, or too stale for your ears; the itch of novelty puts men upon ungrounded subtleties, and that maketh way for error or hardness of heart. Though you hear nothing but what you are acquainted with, be content; they were carnal people that complained they had nothing but the old burden,' Jer. xxiii. 33, 34. Take heed of the

Athenian itch, many times it argueth guilt: we cannot endure to have an old sore rubbed again; as Peter was troubled when Christ spake to him the third time, as I noted before, that his apostasy should once more be revived. (3.) It may justify two duties of great use--meditation and repetition in our families. (1st.) Meditation, for it is good to remember truths that we do already know. Once hath God spoken, and twice have I heard it,' Ps. lxii. 11. We should go over and over it again in our thoughts. First we learn, and then we meditate; study findeth out a truth, and meditation improveth it; as first the meat is taken in, and then the digestion is afterwards. Conscience preacheth over the sermon again to the heart; while the thing is new it doth more exercise study than meditation; but when we have once learned it, then our thoughts should work upon it; for meditation is the improvement of a known truth. (2d.) Repetition in our families; let them hear it again and again, the third blow may make the nail go. If people were humble and sober, they would have new and fresh thoughts every time a truth is revived upon them. At first hearing many are lost through the wandering and distraction of our thoughts, things which upon the review may be brought to hand again; at least youth and children must have line upon line,' as when they learn to write, the same letters and the same copy are written over again and again, till the figure of them be formed in their fancies.

I have done with the preface; I come now to the first instance produced, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not.--to`n laon. The term is of an honourable use in this place--the people--for the peculiar people of God; the holy and elect nation, that had the law and the covenants of promise. This people, after they were delivered,' and that by so great and solemn a deliverance as that out of the land of Egypt,'

were afterwards destroyed;' so that it is ill standing upon privileges. Though many of them to whom the apostle wrote had renounced Gentilism, and were (as it were) come out of Egypt, and made God's people by visible profession; yet, after all this, they might be destroyed in case of disproportionate practice or disobedience to God in that profession. Of Israel's destruction, see Num. xiv. 37; 1 Cor. x. 10. Libertine Christians shall share as bad as obstinate Jews, that is the drift of his argument.

Obs. 1. From this clause observe, that after great mercies, there do usually follow great judgments, if great sins come between: as after their deliverance out of Egypt they were destroyed for unbelief. This may be proved from Christ's advice to the man cured on the Sabbath-day: John v. 14, Thou art made whole, sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.' There is the mercy, the duty thence inferred, and the judgment that doth avenge the quarrel of the abused mercy. Often it cometh to pass that many men's preservation is but a reservation to a worse thing, to a greater judgment. So see Josh. xxiv. 20, He will turn again, and do you hurt, after he hath done you good.' So Isa. lxiii. 10, He bore them (in the arms of his providence), but they rebelled and vexed his spirit, and he was turned to be their enemy.' None usually have greater judgments than such as formerly have had sweet experience of mercy. Why? There is no hatred so great as that which ariseth out of the corruption of love. Disappointed love, abused love groweth outrageous. When Amnon hated Tamar, it is said, The hatred wherewith he hated her was greater than the love wherewith he loved her.' As it is thus with men, such a proportionable severity we may observe in the dispensations of God after a taste of his mercies: Josh, xxiii. 15, It shall come to pass, as all good things are come upon you, which the Lord your God promised you, so the Lord shall bring all evil things

upon you, until he hath destroyed you, when ye have transgressed the covenant of the Lord your God.' No evils like those evils which come after mercy. No sins are so great as those sins which are committed against mercies; there is not only filthiness in them, but unkindness: Ps. cvi. 7, They provoked him at the sea, even at the Red Sea.' Mark, it is ingeminated for the more vehemency, that at the sea, even at the Red Sea, where they had seen the miracles of the Lord, and had experience of his glorious deliverance, that there they durst break out against God. See the contrary in Judges ii. 7. Certainly the more restraints, the greater the offence, when we sin not only against the laws of God, but the loves of God, &c.

Well, then--(1.) It informeth us that there may be danger after deliverance; there are strange changes in providence: Man in his best estate is altogether vanity,' Ps. xxxix. 5. When you are at your best, as the sun at the highest, there may be a declension.

(2.) It is a warning to those that enjoy mercies: Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto you.' The next judgment will be more violent. There are some special sins which you should beware of, even those which testify our unthankfulness after the receipt of mercies. As (1st.) forgetting the vows of our misery. Jacob voweth, Gen. xxviii. 22, but he forgets his vow, and what followed? Horrible disorders and confusions in his family: Dinah deflowered, Reuben goeth into his father's bed, a murder committed upon the Shechemites under a pretence of religion, and then Jacob remembereth his vow. We promise much when we want deliverance, and when we have it, God is neglected; but he will not put it up so; by sad and disastrous accidents he puts us in mind of our old promises. (2d.) When you kiss your own hand, bless your drag,' ascribe it to your merit and power, Hab. i. 16, Deut. ix. 4, for these things are our mercies blasted. (3d.) When we grow proud,

self-confident: if you were never so high, God will bring you low enough; it is a great skill to know how to abound.' She remembered not her last end, therefore she came down wonderfully,' Lam. i. 9. When we forget the changes and mutations to which all outward things are obnoxious, God will give us an experience of them. (4th.) When you continue in your sins, the judgment is but gone cum ammo revertendi, to come again in a worse manner. See Ps. cvi. 43.

Obs. 2. The next observation is taken from the cause of their destruction, intimated in those words, that believed not. Many were the people's sins in the wilderness, murmuring, fornication, rebellion, &c. But the apostle comprehendeth all under this, they believed not. Unbelief is charged upon them as the root of all their miscarriages elsewhere, as Num. xiv. 11, and Deut. i. 32. Whence observe, that unbelief bringeth destruction, or is the cause of all the evil which we do or suffer.

In handling this point, I shall open--(1.) The heinousness of unbelief; (2.) The nature of it; (3.) The cure of it.

1. The heinousness of the sin. That we will consider in general, or more particularly. The general considerations are these:--

[1.] No sin doth dishonour God so much as unbelief doth. It is an interpretative blasphemy, a calling into question of his mercy, power, justice, but especially of his truth: 1 John v. 10, He that believeth not God, hath made him a liar.' You judge him a person not fit to be credited. The giving of the lie is accounted the greatest injury and disgrace amongst men; for truth is the ground of commerce and human society. So that to say a man is a liar is as much as to say a man is unfit to keep company with men. But especially is this a great injury to God, because he standeth more upon his word than upon any other part of his name: Ps. cxxxviii. 2, He hath magnified his word above all his

name.' We have more experience of God in making good his word than in any other thing. As faith honoureth God, so doth unbelief dishonour him. What God doth to the creature, that doth faith to God. God justifieth, sanctifieth, glorifieth the creature, and faith is said to justify God,' Luke vii. 29. To justify is to acquit from accusation. So doth faith acquit God's truth in the word from all the jealousies which the carnal world and our carnal hearts do cast upon him. Faith is said to sanctify God,' Num. xx. 12. To sanctify is to set apart from common use; and God is sanctified when we set God aloof, above all ordinary and common causes, and can believe that he will make good his word, when the course of all things seems to contradict it. Faith is said to glorify God.' Rom. iv. 20. We glorify him declaratively when we give him all that excellency which the word giveth him. Now, because unbelief accuseth God, limiteth him to the course of second causes, and denieth him his glory, therefore is it so heinous and hateful to God.

[2.] It is a sin against which God hath declared most of his displeasure. Search the annals, survey all the monuments of time, see if ever God spared an unbeliever. Hence in the wilderness the apostle saith they were destroyed for unbelief. Many were their sins in the wilderness, murmurings, lustings, idolatry; but the main reason of their punishment was, they believed not,' Look to their final excision and cutting off. Why was it? Di apisti'as for unbelief were they broken off.' Rom. xi. 20; not so much for crucifying the Lord of life.' The gospel was tendered to them after Christ was slain. It was for not believing or refusing the gospel. If you will know what company there is in hell, that catalogue will inform you, Fearful, and unbelievers,' &c., Rev. xxi. 8. If you look to temporal judgments, that nobleman was trodden to death for distrusting God's power, 2 Kings viii. 2, and could only see the plenty, but not taste of it. Nay, it is such a sin

as God hath not spared in his own children. Moses and Aaron could not enter into the land of promise because of their unbelief, Num. xx. 12. So Luke i. 20, Zacharias was struck dumb for not believing what God had revealed. Christ did never chide his disciples so much for anything as for their unbelief: Luke xxiv. 25, O ye fools, and slow of heart to believe;' and why doubt ye, O ye of little faith?' Mat. viii. 26. He chideth them before he chideth the wind. The storm first began in their own hearts.

[3.] It is the mother of all sin. [109] The first sin was the fruit of unbelief. We may plainly observe a faltering of assent, Gen. iii. 3-5; and still it is the ground of all miscarriages, of hardness of heart, and apostasy, Heb. iii. 12, 13. He that believeth not the judgments and threatenings of the word will not stick to do any evil; and he that doth not believe the promises will not be forward to any good. All our neglect and coldness in holy duties cometh from the weakness of our faith. There is a decay at the root. Did we believe heaven and things to come, we should be more earnest and zealous. Many are ashamed of adultery, theft, murder, but not of unbelief, which is the mother of all these.

[4.] Final unbelief is an undoubted evidence of reprobation. See John x. 26, Ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep;' and Acts xiii. 48. Unbelief is God's prison, wherein he keepeth the reprobate world: Rom. xi. 32, He hath shut them up under unbelief,' &c. And shall I continue such a black note upon myself? I know not how soon God may cut me off; and if I die in this estate, I am miserable for ever: Lord, I desire to believe; help my unbelief.'

[5.] It is a sin that depriveth us of much good, of the comforts of providence. Nothing doth ponere obicem, bar and shut out God's operation in order to our relief, so much as this sin: Mark vi. 5, He

could do no mighty work,' &c. So John xi. 40, Said I not unto thee, if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God?' So also of the comfort of ordinances: Heb. iv. 2, The word profited not, be cause it was not mixed with faith in them that heard it.' So for prayer, James i. 7-9. Nay, it barreth heaven's gates. It excluded Adam out of paradise, the Israelites out of Canaan, and us out of the kingdom of heaven, Heb. iii. 17, 18.

Well, then, let us see if we be guilty of this sin: Take heed,' saith the apostle, Heb. iii. 12, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief.' Many have an unbelieving heart when they least think of it. It is easy to declaim against it, but hard to convince men of it, either of the sin or of lying in a state of unbelief; it is the Spirit's work, The Spirit shall convince of sin, because they believe not in me,' John xvi. 9. There are many pretences by which men excuse themselves, some more gross, others more subtle. Many think that all infidels are without the pale, among Turks and heathens. Alas! many, too many, are to be found in the very bosom of the church. The Israelites were God's own people, and yet destroyed because they believed not.' Others think none are unbelievers but those that are given up to the violences and horrors of despair, and do grossly reject or refuse the comforts of the gospel; but they are mistaken; the whole word is the object of faith, the commandments and threatenings as well as the promises; and carelessness and neglect of the comforts of the gospel is un belief, as well as doubts and despairing fears: Mat. xxii. 5, But they made light of it.' He is the worst unbeliever that scorns and slighteth the tenders of God's grace in Christ as things wherein he is not concerned. Briefly, then, men may make a general profession of the name of Christ, as the Turks do of Mahomet, because it is the religion professed there where they are born; a man may take up the

opinions of a Christian country, and not be a whit better than Turks, Jews, or infidels; as he is not the taller of stature that walketh in a higher walk than others do. They may understand their religion, and be able to give a reason of the hope that is in them,' and yet lie under the power of unbelief for all that, as many may see countries in a map which they never enter into. The devil hath knowledge, Jesus I know, and Paul I know,' &c. And those that pretend to knowledge without answer able practice, do but give themselves the lie, 1 John ii. 29. Besides knowledge there may be assent, and yet unbelief still. The devils assent as well as know; they believe there is one God,' James ii., and it is not a naked and inefficacious assent, but such as causeth horrors and tremblings. They believe and tremble;' and they do not only believe that one article, that there is one God, but other articles also: Jesus, thou Son of God, art thou come to torment me before my time?' was the devil's speech; where there is an acknowledging of Christ, and him as the Son of God and judge of the world, and increase of their torment at the last day upon his sentence. Assent is necessary, but not sufficient; laws are not sufficiently owned when they are believed to be the king's laws; there is something to be done as well as believed. In the primitive times, assent was more than it is now, and yet then an inactive assent was never allowed to pass for faith. Confident resting on Christ for salvation, if it be not a resting according to the word, will not serve the turn; there were some that leaned upon the Lord,' Micah iii. 11, whom he disclaimeth. It is a mistaken Christ they rest upon, and upon him by a mistaken faith. It is a mistaken Christ, for the true Christ is the eternal Son of God, that was born of a virgin, and died at Jerusalem, Bearing our sins in his body upon a tree, that we, being dead unto sin, might be alive unto righteousness,' 1 Peter ii. 24. The true Christ is one that gave

himself for us, that he might purify us to be a peculiar people, zealous of good works,' and is now gone into heaven, there to make intercession for us, and will come again from heaven in a glorious manner to take an account of our works, Titus ii. 13, 14. But now when men lie under the power and reign of their sins, and yet pretend to rest upon Christ for salvation, they set up another Christ than the word holdeth forth. And as the Christ is mistaken, so is the faith. It is not an idle trust, but such as is effectual to purge the heart, for the true faith purifieth the heart,' Acts xv. 9. If, besides profession, knowledge, assent, and a loose trust, they should pretend to assurance, or to a strong conceit that Christ died for them, and they shall certainly go to heaven, this will not excuse them from unbelief; this is proton pseudos, the grand mistake, that the strength of faith lieth in a strong persuasion of the goodness of our condition, and the stronger the persuasion the better the faith. If this were true, hardness of heart would make the best faith, and he that could presume most, and be most secure and free from doubts, would be the truest believer, and the goodness of our condition would lie in the strength of our imagination and conceit. Alas! many make full account they shall go to heaven that shall never come there. The foolish virgins were very confident, and the foolish builder goeth on with the building, never suspecting the foundation. Nay, let me tell you, assurance of a good condition, as long as we lie under the power and reign of sin, is the greatest unbelief in the world, for it is to believe the flat contrary to that which God hath revealed in the word; therefore none abuse the Lord and question his truth so much as these do. Where hath God said that men that live in their sins shall be saved? Nay, he hath expressly said the contrary, Be not deceived; neither fornicators, nor adulterers, nor idolaters,' &c., 1 Cor. vi. 9;

so that you give God the lie, or conceit that he will break his word for your sakes; nay, in a sense, you even dare him to make good his truth. He hath said, Be not deceived; you shall never enter,' &c., and you say, Though I am an adulterer, a drunkard, a worldling, I shall go to heaven for all that. Now in a little while you shall see whose word shall stand, God's or yours, Jer. xliv. 28.

Once more, the word is not supposed to be without all kind of power. Men may have some relish of good things,' and some experience of the powers of the world to come,' and yet be in an un believing state: see Heb. vi. 5, where the apostle speaketh of a common work, opposed to ta` echo'mena tes soteri'as, to things that do accompany salvation,' ver 9, or have salvation necessarily annexed to them. They may have some feeling of the power of the truth, and yet afterwards make defection, out of a love to the world and worldly things; they may have many spiritual gifts, change their outward conversation, make a glorious profession, and be thereupon enrolled among the saints; yea, be of great use and service in the church, though for their own ends and interests, remaining all this while unrenewed, and having their worldly inclinations to honour, esteem, pleasure, profit, unbroken and unmortified; for there is no such enemy to faith as a carnal, worldly heart. Therefore let men pretend what they will, when they are as eager upon the world as if they had no other matters to mind, and the love of outward greatness doth sway with them more than the love of heaven, and the praise of men more than the approbation of God, and carnal ease and pleasure more than delight in God, how can they be said to believe? John v. 44; for such kind of lusts and earthly affections are inconsistent with the power and vigour of saving faith; therefore till the bent of the heart be towards heavenly things, and carnal affections be soundly mortified, unbelief reigneth. I pitch it upon this evidence,

partly because the great drift of conversion is to draw off the soul, as from self to Christ, and from sin to holiness, so from the world to heaven. See 1 Peter i. 3, Begotten to a lively hope;' and 1 John v. 4, He that is born of God overcometh the world;' as soon as we are converted, the heart is drawn and set towards heavenly things; partly because the main thing to be believed, next to God's being, is his bounty, Heb. xi. 6, that we may make God our rewarder; and partly because the main work of faith is to draw off the soul from sensible things to things unseen,' and to come, Heb. xi. 1; so that whatsoever glorious profession men make, or whatsoever service they perform in the church, or whatsoever experience they have in the enlargement of gifts, yet if they be careless of things to come, and eager after the things of the world, faith is not thoroughly planted; for a main thing wanting in these temporaries was a resolution to serve God for God's sake, or to make him their paymaster, which can never be till carnal inclinations to the honours, pleasures, and profits of the world be subdued, and we are willing to lay down all these things at Christ's feet, taking only so much as he shall fairly allow us for our use.

Thus much for the heinousness of unbelief in the general.

Secondly, Let me tell you that all unbelief is not alike heinous, as will appear by these considerations.

[1.] Total reigning unbelief is a black mark; such as lie under it are in the high way to hell: John iii. 18, He that believeth not is condemned already;' the law hath condemned him, and whilst he remaineth in that estate, the gospel yieldeth him no hope: John iii. 36, The wrath of God abideth on him;' and if he die in it, he is miserable for ever. Rev. xxi. 8, Fearful and unbelievers are reckoned among the inhabitants of hell. First he is condemned by that ancient sentence, that whosoever sinneth shall die;' which is not reversed, but standeth

in full force till faith in Christ: John viii. 24, If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.' And if we continue refusing the counsels of the gospel, to the condemnation that is already, to the condemnation of the law, there is added a new condemnation for despising the gospel. But now partial unbelief, where faith prevaileth, though there be many doubts and fears, leaveth a man obnoxious to temporal judgments, but not to eternal ruin.

[2.] All unbelief is the more heinous the more means you have to the contrary, as counsels, warnings, promises clearly held forth: see John xv. 22, If I had not spoken to them,' &c., and John iii. 19, Light is come into the world,' &c. The word is preached eis martu'rion, for a witness, Mat. xxiv. 14, with Mark xiii. 9; first to them, and if not received, then against them. Did not I warn you?' saith Reuben to his brethren. Every offer and warning will be as so many swords in your consciences. One observeth well, [110] that twice Christ marvelled, once at the unbelief of his countrymen the Galileans, that had so much means, Mark vi. 8, and another time at the faith of the centurion, a stranger, Mat. viii. 10, who had so little means. It is a thing to be marvelled at, that a people should have so much means and profit but little. Wonder is a thing that proceedeth from ignorance, and Christ, though not ignorant, yet would express all human affections; and the rather that we might look upon it as a strange and uncomely thing not to believe after so many helps vouchsafed to us.

[3.] The more experiences, comforts, evidences, and manifestations of God's power and presence we have had, the greater the unbelief. This was that which provoked the Lord against Israel to destroy them in the wilderness: Num. xiv. 11, How long will it be ere ye believe in me, for all the signs that I have showed?' God traineth up his people by experience, that they may know what he can or will do for them; and

therefore by every experience we should grow up into a greater courage and strength of faith, and as David, draw inferences of hope against the present danger from the lion and the bear, 1 Sam. xvii. 36, or as Paul, he hath, and doth, and therefore will, 2 Cor. i. 10, other wise these experiences are given in vain. Christ was angry with his disciples for not remembering the miracle of the loaves, Mat. xvi. 9, when they were in a like strait again. When we show a child a letter here, and the same letter again in another word, and the same again in a third, if he should be to seek when we show him again the same letter in the next word, we are angry, and think our teaching lost. So when God giveth an evidence of his power and care in this strait, and, in a condescension to our weakness, giveth us a like evidence again, and in a third strait he teacheth us how to read and apply a promise, and yet upon the next difficulty we are to seek again, God is angry with us, because his condescensions are lost. And in this sense God is more angry with the unbelief of his children than of others, because they have more experiences, and are so ready to distrust him that never failed them.

[4.] The more deliberate our unbelief is, the worse. In times of inconsiderate passion, and in a fit of temptation, it may break out from God's children. David, when he spake in haste, was fain to eat his words: Ps. cxvi. 11, I said in my haste all men are liars;' Samuel, and all who had told him of the kingdom; I shall never live to see the promise fulfilled: so Ps. xxxi. 22, I said in my haste, I am cut off; nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my supplications,' In a fit, discontent may break out, but it is presently opposed and checked; but when it groweth into a settled distemper, then it is worse: as that in Ps. lxxiii. was a more lasting temptation; therefore David calleth himself beast, ver. 22, for his foolish and brutish thoughts of

providence.

[5.] Where unbelief is expressed and put into words, there it is more heinous. Unbelieving thoughts are a great evil, but when they break out into murmurings and bold expostulations, with or against God, then they are worse. It is better to keep the temptation within doors, that, if the fire be kindled, the sparks may not fly abroad to enkindle others; you grieve God by your thoughts, but you dishonour and disparage him when they break out into words: Mal. iii. 13, Your words have been stout against me, saith the Lord.' It is a greater daring to avow openly and publish our suspicions of God, and discontents against him: Deut. i. 34, The Lord heard the voice of your words, and was wroth, saying, Not one of these shall enter my rest.' Others may be perverted, and make ill use of our infirmities.

[6.] Where there are professions to the contrary, there the unbelief is the worse: After these things do the Gentiles seek,' Mat. vi. 32. Christians are not only instructed to do better, but profess to do other wise. Distrust is a pagan sin; you are acquainted with a particular providence, with a heavenly Father, with the happiness of another world, and for you to be worldly, distrustful, to make it your business what you shall eat and drink, that is a most unworthy thing: for a professed infidel that believeth not eternity, that never heard of God's fatherly care, nor of heaven or hell, to be altogether in the world, this were no such marvel; but for you, that profess to believe the gospel, to have your hearts fail and sink upon every occasion, and to be under the tyranny of distracting cares, how sad is it!

Thus much for the heinousness of unbelief, which I was willing to represent thus at large, that you might see what just reason there was that God should destroy those in the wilderness that believed not.

2. The next thing is to open the nature of it. I shall here give--(1.)

The kinds; (2.) The notes whereby this sin may be discovered.

For the kinds of it, unbelief is twofold--negative and positive.

1. Negative unbelief is found in those to whom the sound of the gospel never came, or to whom God hath denied the means whereby faith might be wrought in them. The want of means is not their sin, but their punishment, or misery at least; and therefore they are not condemned so much for want of faith in Christ, as for not obeying the law of nature, for sinning against that knowledge which they received in Adam. Now they never received the light of the gospel in Adam, neither had Adam the knowledge thereof revealed to him, but by special grace after the fall when he stood in the quality of a private person, then was the promise of the woman's seed revealed to him. Therefore they that never heard of Christ are not condemned simply for not believing in him; for their sins against the law they are condemned, not for their unbelief against the gospel. [111] That is the reason why Christ, when he had said, John iii. 18, Every one that believeth not is condemned already,' presently addeth by way of explication, This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world,' &c., as restraining it to positive infidelity. Though without Christ they can never be saved, yet God will not damn them for this reason, for not believing in Christ, for he never gave them the means of the knowledge of Christ.

2. Positive unbelief, which is found in them that have means to believe in Christ, and yet neglect and refuse him, and the offers of grace and life in him, and so continue in the state of nature. This is twofold--(1.) Total; (2.) Partial.

[1.] Total unbelief in those that continue professed infidels after the tenders of the gospel; as the word where it came found different success, as at Antioch, Acts xiii. 48; at Iconium, Acts xiv. 1, 2; at Athens, Acts xvii. 34, many refused to make any profession.

[2.] Partial, when men are lustred with some general profession, and gained to some owning of Christ, but do not fully believe in him, not cordially embrace him; either through the weakness of their assent, looking upon the gospel only as probable, or out of the strength of their worldly and carnal affections they relish not and esteem not the counsels and comforts of the gospel, not the comforts and hopes of the gospel, because they are matters of another world, and lie out of sight and reach; but worldly comforts act more forcibly upon them, as being more suited to their hearts, and at hand, and ready to be enjoyed. Thus Israel out of unbelief despised the pleasant land,' Ps. cvi. 24, counted it not worth the looking after; and the counsels of the gospel they refuse out of an indulgence to fleshly lusts. As there is in the gospel the history and doctrine of salvation, so there are counsels of salvation which must be obeyed, and therefore we hear of obeying the gospel,' 2 Thes. i. 8, and the obedience of faith' elsewhere.

This unbelief is again twofold--(1.) Reigning; (2.) In part broken, though not wholly subdued.

[1st.] Reigning unbelief is in all natural men, who are not only guilty of unbelief, but described by the term unbelievers, as being persons never thoroughly gained to the obedience of the gospel, or the acceptance of Christ, and life and peace in him. It bewrayeth itself--(1.) By hardness of heart; they are not moved nor affected with their own misery, nor with redemption by Christ, and the great things of eternity depending thereupon; nor the invitations of grace, calling them to the enjoyment of them: Acts xix. 9, And divers were hardened, and believed not,' &c. A hard heart is one of the devil's impregnable forts, not easily attacked by the force and power of the word: men are born with a hard heart; we bring the stone with us into the world, and by positive unbelief, or by slighting offers of grace made to us, it

increaseth upon us. Hardness of heart is known by the foolishness of it, when Seeing we see not, and hearing we hear not,' Acts xxviii. 26, 27, when we have a grammatical knowledge of things, but no spiritual discerning. It is also known by the insensibleness of it, when men have no feelings of terrors by the law, of peace, joy, and hope by the gospel; no taste of the good word at all, but are as stones unmoved with all that is spoken. (2.) By a neglect of spiritual and heavenly things; they do not make it their business and work to look after those things, Mat. xxii. 5, But they made light of it, [112] and went one to his farm, another to his merchandise.' Your callings are not your e'rgon, your work and main business; that is to look after an interest in Christ; therefore when this is the least thought of, and the farm and the merchandise engrosseth all our time and care, men believe not. Could they slight Christ and holy things if they did soundly and thoroughly believe the word of God? Would they not find some time to mend their souls? Looking after the inward man, that is the main care; and men would first regard it if they did believe that the soul were so concerned both in point of danger and hope. Surely when men take no heed to the great offers of the gospel, they do not look upon it as a certain truth. (3.) By secret suspicions in their own souls against the truth of the gospel. That profane wretch said Haec fabula Cliristi. They look upon it as a golden dream to make fools fond with it; and that all opinions in religion are but a logomachy, a mere strife of words, or a doctrine to set the world together by the ears, as Gallic, Acts xviii. 15, or a fancy and fond superstition, Acts xxv. 19, and that we need not trouble our heads about it. These are the natural thoughts which men have of the gospel. Such thoughts may rush into the heart of a godly man, but they are abominated and cast out with indignation; but in wicked men they reign and dwell; they live by these

kind of principles. I remember Christ saith of his disciples, aleuos e'gnosan, John xvii. 8, They have known surely that I came out from thee.' The light of faith is an undoubted certain light; but in wicked men, their assent is mingled with doubting, ignorance, error, and sottish prejudices against the doctrine and worship of God, Mat. iii. 14; natural atheism in them is not cured, and that faith which they pretend to and profess is but a loose wavering opinion, not a grounded and settled persuasion of the truth of the gospel. The assurance of understanding,' as the apostle calleth it, Col. ii. 2, dependeth upon experience and an inward sense of the truth, and is wrought by the Holy Ghost, 1 Cor. ii. 4, and therefore, I suppose, proper to the godly.
(4.) By rejecting the counsels of salvation; see Acts xiii. 46; Luke vii. 31. All natural men are children of disobedience,' Eph. ii. 2, out of pride scorning either the messages of God--Folly to him,' 1 Cor. ii. 14, or the messengers--Is not this the carpenter's son?' Mark vi. 3, foining and fencing with the word, and defeating the methods of grace used to gain them, Rom. x. 21, guilty of an obstinate frowardness: It is a people that do err in their hearts,' Ps. xcv. 11; not in their minds only, but their hearts;' as if they did say, We desire not the knowledge of thy ways,' Job xxi. 14. (5.) By the unholiness of their lives. The apostle saith, 2 Peter iii. 11, We that look for such things, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holiness and godliness of conversation?' from whence we may plainly infer that they which are not such manner of persons do not look for such things as faith inferreth--obedience; where the prince is there his train will be; so is unbelief known by disobedience; when men live as carnally and carelessly as an infidel, there is not a pin to choose between them.
(6.) When men hear the word and never make application, or convert it to their own use, it is a sign they are under the power of reigning

unbelief. In faith there is assent or believing the word to be the word of God, or that it is a faithful saying,' 1 Tim. i. 15; and then consent or approbation of the word as a good word or worthy saying, and then application, or converting the word to our own use. So in unbelief many doubt of the truth of the word, others acknowledge not the worth of it, they do not glorify the word,' Acts xiii. 48; most that speak well of the word, and approve it in their consciences, do not urge their own hearts with it: What do we say to these things?' Rom. viii. 31, and know it for thy good,' Job v. 27. The word is far sooner approved than applied, and yet till it be applied it worketh not. When we see ourselves involved and included in the general promise and precept, and are accordingly affected, then are we said to believe. In Ps. xxvii. 8, the injunction is plural, Seek ye my face;' but the answer is singular, Thy face, Lord, will I seek.' Thus must all truths be applied, and that in their method and order, for there is an analogy and proportion between them; as the doctrine of man's misery, that I may consider this is my case, and, having a feeling of it, may groan for deliverance; the doctrine of redemption by Christ, that we may put in for a share, and assure our own interest; the doctrine of the thankful life, that we may deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow Christ in the obedience of all his precepts. The first doctrine must be made the ground of complaint, the second of comfort and hope, the third of resolution and practice. But when we suffer these truths to hover in the brain without application, or hear them only as children learn them by rote, never thus reflecting, What am I? what have I done? what will become of me? &c., unbelief remaineth undisturbed. (7.) By apostasy or falling off from God. The great business of faith is, by patient continuance in well-doing, to look for glory, honour, and immortality,' Rom. ii. 8; but now to tire and grow

weary, or to fall off from God as not worthy the waiting upon, argueth the height and reign of unbelief, whatever faith we pretended unto for a flash and pang. (8.) Desperation when conviction groweth to a height, and legal bondage gets the victory of carnal pleasure: Gen. iv. 13, My sin is greater,' &c., and Jer. xviii. 12, There is no hope,' &c. When men think it is in vain to trouble themselves, their damnation is fixed, and therefore resolve to go to hell as fast as they can; such desperate wickedness may there be in the heart of a man.

[2d.] Unbelief in part broken; and so it implieth the remainders of this natural evil in the godly, in whom, though faith be begun, yet it is mixed with much weakness: Mark ix. 24, Lord, I believe; help my unbelief.' This unbelief is manifested--(1.) By a loathness to apply the comforts of the gospel; it is the hardest matter in the world to bring God and the soul together, or to be at rest in Christ. When we are truly sensible we draw back. Depart from me,' saith Peter, for I am a sinful man,' Luke v. 8; and he should rather say, Draw nigh to me. The poor trembling sinner thinketh so much of the judge that he for gets the father. Though the soul longeth for Christ above all things, yet it is loath to take him for comfort and reconciliation, but floateth up and down in a suspensive hesitancy. (2.) By calling God's love into question upon every affliction, and in an hour of temptation unravelling all our hopes: see Ps. lxxvii. 7-10, Isa. xlix. 14, and Judges vi. 13; as if the Lord were the God of the mountains and not of the valleys.' We are wont to say, If God did love us why is this befallen us? Those are fits of the old distemper. Christ when crucified would not let go his interest, but crieth out, My God! my God!' (3.) By fears in a time of danger, carnal fears, such as do perplex us when we are employed in Christ's work and service; as the disciples that were embarked with him were afraid to perish in his company: Why are ye so

fearful, O ye of little faith?' Mat. viii. 26. Filial fear or reverence of God is the daughter of faith, as distrustful fear is the enemy of it. Trouble is the touchstone of faith; if we cannot commit ourselves to God in quietness of heart, it argueth weakness. God hath undertaken to bring his people out of every strait, in a way most conducing to his glory and their welfare, Rom. viii. 28; and therefore when the word yieldeth us no support, Ps. cxix. 50, and the promises of God cannot keep us from sinking and despondency of heart, we bewray our unbelief. (4.) By murmurings in case of carnal disappointment. Discontent argueth unbelief; they quarrel with God's providences, because they believe not his promises: Ps. cvi. 24, They believed not his word, but murmured in their tents;' it is ill, and they cannot see how it can be better. So Deut. i. 32 with 34, In this you believed not the Lord your God.' (5.) By carking in case of straits; bodily wants are more pressing than spiritual. Here faith is put to a present trial, and therefore here we bewray ourselves: Mat. vi. 30, Shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?' He doth not say of no faith, for the temptation is incident to a godly man; they do not oftener bewray their unbelief in distrusting God about outward supplies than about eternal life, which yet I confess is very irrational; for if a man cannot trust God with his estate, how shall he trust him with his soul? And to a considerate person there are far more prejudices against eternal life than against temporal supplies. Look, as it was a folly in Martha to believe that Lazarus should rise at the general resurrection, and to distrust his being raised from the dead after four days' lying in the grave, John xi. 24, so it is a great folly to pretend to expect eternal life, and not to be able to depend upon God for the supplies of life temporal. (6.) By coldness and carelessness in the spiritual life. If men did believe that heaven were such an excellent place, they would not so

easily turn aside to the contentments of the flesh and the profits of the world. Men have but a conjectural apprehension of things to come, of the comforts of another world. As things at a distance; sometimes we see them, and sometimes we lose their sight, so that we are not certain whether we see them, yea or no; so it falleth out in heavenly matters; we are poor short-sighted' creatures, 2 Peter i. 9. Sometimes we have a glimpse of the glory of the world to come, some flashes, and again the mind is beclouded; and that is the reason why we mind these things so little, and seek after them so little. A steady view and sound belief would engage us to more earnestness: they that believe the high prize of our calling,' will press on to the mark,' Phil. iii. 14. Surely men do not believe that heaven is worth the looking after, otherwise they would seek it more diligently, Heb. vi. 14. A poor beast that is going homeward goeth cheerfully. (7.) Indirect courses to get a living and subsistence in the world, as if God were not all-sufficient,' Gen. xvii. 1. To break through where God hath made up the hedge, argueth that we do not depend upon him; as by temporising or by unjust gain. This, for a fit and in some distemper, may be incident to God's children.

3. The last thing in the method proposed is the cure of unbelief. God by his mighty power can only cure it, Eph. i. 19; but the means which we must use may be reduced to two heads--1. Cautions; 2. Directions.

[1.] Cautions. (1.) Take heed of setting God a task: Ps. lxxviii. 19, 20, Can the Lord prepare a table in the wilderness?' &c. So Mat. xxvii. 40, If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.' This is to go beyond the promise, and to indent with God upon conditions of our own making. So Mat. iv., If thou be the Son of God, turn these stones into bread.' So when we prescribe to God, in matter of allowance; we would have God maintain us at such a rate; be so fed, so clothed, have so

much by the year, such portions for our children: He that will be rich,' &c., 1 Tim. vi. 9. God never undertook to give us meat for our lusts. When we subject his providence to our direction, and prescribe what he shall do for our satisfaction, we do but make a snare for ourselves. (2.) Take heed of betraying faith by distrusting present means; it is a usual thing: Luke xvi. 30, If one came from the dead they would believe.' If we had oracles or miracles, or God did speak to us from heaven as heretofore, then we should not falter in our trust as we now do; but by this excuse you impeach the scriptures. Moses and the prophets are a sufficient ground for faith, and extraordinary means will not work on them upon whom ordinary do not prevail. There were weaknesses then, and so there will be; whatsoever dispensation God may use, man is man still: They believed not though he opened the clouds, and commanded manna from heaven,' Ps. lxxviii. 23. (3.) Take heed of ifs in principles of faith. Foundation-stones if laid loose endanger the whole building; take notice of the first hesitancy: Gen. iii., Yea, hath God said?' So Mat. iv. 3, If thou be the Son of God,' &c. There was a plain oracle from heaven determining it a little before, Thou art my beloved Son,' but the devil would fain draw it to an if. (4.) Beware of sin. Doubts are the fumes of sin, like the vapours that come from a foul stomach: uprightness begetteth serenity and clearness. As in nature there is often a kukloge'nnesis, a circular generation, vapours beget showers, and showers beget vapours; so in moral and spiritual things there is such a circular generation; unbelief maketh way for sin, and sin for unbelief. Sin will weaken trust, it cannot be otherwise; shame, and horror, and doubt, these are the consequences of sin. God never undertook to bear us out in the devil's work.

[2.] Directions. (1.) Strengthen your assent to the word of God. Fire if well kindled will of itself burst out into a flame; so assurance and

comfort would more easily follow if there were a thorough and un doubted assent to the truths of the word. We take them up hand over head, and then when a temptation cometh, no wonder that the building tottereth when the foundation is so weak. There are several degrees of assent: conjecture, which is but a lighter inclination of the mind to that which is probable; opinion, which is a stronger inclination to think that which is represented is true. But there is formido oppositi; it is mixed with hesitancy and doubts, oligopisti'a, weak faith, or firm adherence upon sufficient conviction; yet doubts may arise, and in time of temptation this degree of assent may be over borne. But above this there is a thorough certainty or assurance of understanding,' Col. ii. 2. We should never cease till we come to this. It is a great mistake to think that we need not look after the settling of our assent to the truths of the word, but take these for supposed; but in an hour of temptation we are made sensible of our folly herein; and if I am not mistaken, much of our carelessness and unsettledness of life doth proceed from thence. (2.) In settling assent, begin with natural principles, and then go on to those which are spiritual and mystical,--as God's being, and God's bounty in the everlasting rewards, Heb. xi. 6; the necessity of purity and holiness, Heb. xii. 14; the fall and misery of the creature; and then our redemption by Christ, &c. 1 observe the apostles, when they came to gain men to faith, began with truths suited to their capacity and present understanding. With the vulgar they evince creation and providence, by arguments taken from showers of rain and the courses of nature, Acts xiv. 16, 17. With the philosophers they urge the notions of a first cause and a first mover, and those inclinations in nature towards an eternal good, Acts xvii. (3.) Urge your hearts with the truths you assent to, and work them upon your affections, Rom. viii. 31; Heb. ii. 3; and Job v. 27. (4.) Observe

the disproportion of your respects to things present and things to come. If the judgment-seat were fixed and the books opened, how would natural men tremble? Now faith should make it as present, Heb. xi. 1. The apostle saith, I saw the dead, small and great, stand before the Lord,' &c., Rev. xx. 12. Faith, which is the evidence of things not seen,' should see it as if it were in being. The light of faith differeth not from the light of prophecy in regard of the certainty of the thing which is to come, or the assured expectation of it. The light of prophecy requireth a special revelation, and differeth in degree from the light or sight of faith, as it causeth rapture and ecstatic motions; but as to the seeing of things to come with certainty, there they agree. Well, then, if you would discern the strength or weakness of your faith, observe how differently you are affected with what is present and what is future; so also how differently you are affected with things visible and things invisible, with things temporal and eternal. If upon easy terms you might have a good bargain for lands and riches, how readily would men embrace the offer? For temporal profit what pains will they take? But now in things of soul concernment we are not alike affected, which is an argument we do not believe them. In all cases it is good to put spiritual things in a parallel with temporal instances. We are taught that wisdom: Mal. i. 8, Offer it now to the governor,' &c. Would we do thus to an earthly potentate as we do to God? If an able potent friend promise help in troubles, how are we cheered with it? If God promise the same things we are little comforted. If every offence that we commit were liable to the notice of man, and our punishment should be to hold our hand in scalding lead for half an hour, men would be more afraid to offend than now they are in the sight of God, who knoweth all their thoughts, and hath threatened eternal torment. If the tasting of such a meat would bring present

death, who would be so foolhardy as to meddle with it? Nay, when a thing is but likely to do us hurt, as some meats in case of the cholic, gout, or stone, how cautious are we? To conclude all, let me give you Chrysostom's supposition; for besides unbelief, there is somewhat in the strength of evil inclination. Suppose a man mightily desirous of rest and sleep, so that he can hardly hold open his eyes, and there were an offer made him of free and undisturbed rest for one night, but in case he gave way to it, to be held under a hundred years' torment, would he venture, and, with so great a hazard, gratify his drowsy humour? Yet such is our fearlessness and security, that we can run the hazard of eternal torment for a little carnal satisfaction. If a man were sentenced to death, and in danger of execution every moment, would not he bestir himself and improve all his interest for a pardon? We are all condemned already;' but how few are solicitous to get a copy of their discharge! (5.) Bewail the relics of unbelief, Mark ix. 24. (6.) Chide your hearts for your dejection and distrust of God's providence; as Ps. xlii. 5, Why art thou so disquieted, O my soul,' &c., and Ps. lxxvii. 10, This is my infirmity.' It is the duty of a gracious man to rebuke his fears, to chide himself for admitting mistakes of God's love, suggestions of unbelief, and disputes against the promises. (7.) Consider how willing Christ is to help you. He carrieth home the stray lamb upon his own. shoulders rejoicing, Luke xv. 5. How he prizeth the weak beginnings of faith! Smoking flax will he not quench,' Mat. xii. 20; taketh notice of the green figs, Cant. ii.; with a mild condescension indulgeth our infirmities: Reach hither thy fingers, Thomas,' John xx. This for the cure of unbelief.

[107] Qu. external'?--ED.

[108] Luth. in Gen. xix.

[109] Qualitas malae vitae initium habet ab infidelitate.'--Aug.

[110] Despaigne on the Creed.

[111] At the last day there is a difference made between them that know not God,' i.e., by the light of nature, and those that obey not the gospel,' i.e., answer not God's ends in the revelation of the gospel, 2 Thes. i. 8.

[112] Amele'santes, they would not take it into their care and thoughts.

Ver. 6. And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left

their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day.

In this verse you have the second instance, from the apostate angels, who, notwithstanding the dignity and height of their nature, upon their rebellion were left to a dreadful punishment. In this instance there is an argument not a pari (as in the former verse), but a majore ad minus, not from a like case, but from the greater to the lesser; for if God spared not such creatures as by the grace of creation were advanced to such an excellency of being, certainly he will not spare us, whatever gospel privileges we have, if we walk unsuitably.

In these words observe:--(1.) The sin of the angels, they kept not their first estate. (2.) Their punishment, which is twofold:--

1. Present and felt.

2. Future and decreed.

1. Present, which is also double:--(1.) Poena damni, their loss, they left their own habitation. (2.) Poena sensûs, their punishment of pain or sense, he hath reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness.

2. Future and decreed, unto the judgment of the great day.

Because I will not perplex the discourse by grasping at too much at one time, I shall discuss each circumstance apart, and in distinct explication. I begin with the phrases implying their sin and fall. And the angels: the expression is plural, to note the great number of those which fell. Their first estate, te'n arche`n: the word may be translated either their principality or their beginning, and, which is all one, first estate. If you translate it principality, it will well enough suit with the scope of the apostle; and the angels are often

called principalities' in scripture, because of their great power and excellent nature: so Col. i. 16, Thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers;' all which terms imply the dignity of the angelical nature; nay, the devils themselves, because of that power and cunning which they still retain, are called principalities:' Eph. vi. 12, We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world.' If you translate it beginning or first estate, it will more fully express the misery and fall of the apostate angels, they being not only departed from the excellency and power, but from the integrity and righteousness wherein they were first created. So that the point is, that the angels are fallen from the condition of their original excellency and integrity. So Peter, 2 Peter ii. 4, ange'lon amartesa'nton, God spared not the angels that sinned,' &c.; and John viii. 44, The devil abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him.' That purity and integrity wherein they were created is there called truth,' because truth is the perfection of any rational creature, and that holiness which they had was only to be kept up by the truth or right notions of God. In opening this point I shall inquire:--

1. What was this arche', or first estate.

2. What was their sin, or how they departed from it

3. How they came to sin.

4. The number of them that fell.

5. The time.

1. I do confess the scriptures do speak somewhat sparingly of the nature or fall of angels, it being calculated chiefly for the use of man; but some hints there are which we shall take notice of and improve, not to satisfy curiosity, but to serve profit. What then is this first estate from which they are departed? I answer--Their

original condition of holiness and happiness. Every creature which the Lord made, he saw it to be good; much more the angels, whom God created for his own train and company; they are called the sons of God,' Job xxxviii. 7, because they bore his image, and that in a more eminent degree than man, as being wholly spiritual substances, just, holy, pure, in all qualities representing God their father. It is said of man, thou hast made him a little lower than the angels,' Ps. viii. 5. When man was at his best there was an inferiority, the image of God was given to us in a less degree; although we were placed above all visible creatures, yet than the angels we were a little lower. That they were excellent appeareth in that the angelical obedience is made the pattern of ours, Mat. vi. 10; and our happiness in heaven is expressed by the condition of their nature: Mat. xxii. 30, They are as the angels of God in heaven;' yea, it is notable that when the scriptures would express any excellency, they use to say it is fit for angels Thus manna is called angels' food,' Ps. lxxviii. 25, not as if they needed food, spirits are not capable of corporal refreshments; but if so high a creature should need food, he could have no better. So the tongue of angels,' 1 Cor. xiii. 1; that is, with a tongue becoming creatures of so perfect an understanding. But you will say, These expressions are meant of the good angels. I answer--That at their first creation they had the same common nature and excellency, as appeareth by the name of thrones, dominions, and powers,' which they yet retain in common with the good angels; yea, and by that power, wisdom, and knowledge which is yet left. In their innocency they were alike good and alike happy, and could contemplate and behold God, and embrace him with delight as others did; all that is supernatural in the good angel is the grace of confirmation, by which they abide in the knowledge and love of God, whereas others left te'n arche`n, their first estate,' and it is

probable this grace was given to the good angels in the very moment of their creation, before any merit of theirs or use of their natural abilities, as appeareth by the others' sudden fall, and because they are chosen in Christ, who is the head of men and angels, Col. i. 16.

2. What was their sin? There is a great deal of difference among divines about it; for herein they proceed by guess and conjecture rather than any certain proof. Howbeit, there is enough to vindicate God's justice against them. Quaevis peccata, saith Aquinas, sunt in malis angelis. According to his opinion, they have the guilt of all sin upon them, as tempting man to every sin; but what was the special formal sin is not so easily determined. Some say, affectation of the divinity; others say, flat rebellion against the law of their creation, or rash attempts against the empire and sovereignty of God; others envy, be cause of the human nature exalted above the angelical in Christ, he took not the nature of angels,' Heb. ii. 16. But whether that mystery were made known to them is uncertain; rather there are probabilities to the contrary; for the good angels know it now by God's dispensations to the church, Eph. iii. 10. Others think rebellion against a particular law given to them, as that concerning eating the forbidden fruit was to man. Whether it were affecting a higher degree above their creation, or refusing their office and ministration about man, or confidence in their own gifts and received excellency, in a matter of so great uncertainty it is hard to determine. To state their sin, take these propositions:--(1.) The law which made their act to be sin was the moral law, as being the copy of God's holiness, his revealed will to all rational creatures; and they are said to sin, 2 Peter ii. 4, and amarti'a, sin, is anomi'a, a transgression of a law,' 1 John iii. 4; and of no other law do we read but of the moral law, which (as is probable) was given to the angels, excepting only such

things as are not suitable to a spiritual nature, the commandment concerning adultery or unlawful propagation, for they neither marry nor give in marriage,' Mat. xxii. 30, a thing proper to the bodily life. (2.) The most likely thing in their sin was pride; there is pride in every sin, namely, a despising and contempt of the commandment; and this is a sin agreeable enough to a spiritual nature, as adultery, drunkenness, and such sins are proper to a corporeal and sensitive nature: uperephani'a (saith Chrysostom) du'nameis asomatous kate'stase kai` kate'balen a'nothen. To prove it, the fathers [113] usually quote that place, Isa. xiv. 12, 13, How art thou fallen from heaven, Lucifer, son of the morning I for thou hast said in thy heart, I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God, I will be like the Most High.' But these are but metaphorical passages concerning the king of Babylon, and the ground of the mistake was because the angels are often in scripture set forth by stars, as Job xxxviii. 7. That testimony which is most cogent is in 1 Tim. iii. 6, Ordain not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil;' this is, lest he make himself guilty of that sin for which the devil was condemned and rejected of God, namely of pride; and James iii. 15, [114] pride is called devilish wisdom; the sin is often to be read in the judgment that followeth it. God's throwing them down from the dignity of their estates was a sign that they aspired above it, and it may be collected from the first temptation, Ye shall be as gods,' as himself said, in the sense of the fathers, Ero sicut altissimus, so to our first parents he said, Eritis tanquam dii. (3.) They do best that make it a compound sin, accommodating all opinions; for, look, as there are many sins in that one act by which Adam fell, unbelief, pride, ingratitude, disobedience, &c., so in this act of the angels there might be many sins, for though

pride be a chief sin in it, yet what kind of pride it was, or how discovered, it cannot be determined. Every opinion is asserted with equal probability. It might be envy at man, as we see the good angels rejoiced at their happiness, Job xxxviii. 7; Luke ii. 14, 15, and Luke xv. 7; or affectation of worship, as we see now they delight in it, or any other rebellion against God's empire and majesty.

3. How they came to sin. The angels being created pure, they had no lust within to incline them; being in heaven, they had no object without to draw and allure them; there was no evil tracture, no tempter; how could they sin? I answer--(1.) It is probable that many of the angels sinned by temptation and seducement, and that one great angel, now called Beelzebub, first fell, and drew the rest after him: Mat. xxv. 41, The devil and his angels,' and Mat. x. 25, Beelzebub the prince of devils;' it was the name of the idol of the Ekronites, 2 Kings i. 2, and signified the god or lord of flies. Now, because the Jews knew that they were devils that were worshipped in the idols of the Gentiles, they gave the names of the idols to the devils or evil angels, and the chief of the devils they called by the name of Beelzebub, so Mat. xii. 24, implying one that was the prince of the unclean spirits, called devil, Satan, the great dragon, and the god of this world; from all which we may probably collect that there was a prince or chief of the apostate angels, who was the ringleader in this faction and rebellion against God. (2.) Because the question returneth, How came the first angel then to fall? I answer--It is hard to conceive how sin came into the angels first; all that we can say is this, that the angels were created good, yet mutable and free, and they voluntarily chose not to abide in their own estates. All the answer Austin would give to this question was, Deus non sunt--they are not God; it is God's prerogative alone to be immutable; they might sin

because they were creatures. And Aquinas giveth this reason: God cannot sin, because his act is his rule; but all creatures, though never so pure, if not assisted by grace, may sin: Job iv. 18, He chargeth his angels with folly;' there is mutability in the angelical nature, there called folly. Certainly God was not the cause of their fall, by infusing evil to them; it was the error of the Manichees to say they were created evil; nor by his prescience, for that enforceth not; nor his voluntary permission, for they were left to their own sway; nor his decree, for that is within himself, and doth not compel the creature; neither is God to be looked upon as consenting to the action, in that he did not hinder them from it, or in that he did not sustain them by his own grace, for he oweth this grace to none, and giveth it when and to whom he pleaseth; and in the angelical nature, as well as the human, he would discover his justice and mercy, and the freedom of his dispensations.

4. The number, how many fell? The schoolmen are too rash. Some say, just as many fell as stood; others, that a third part fell, abusing that place, Rev. xii. 4, That the dragon drew a third part of the stars of heaven after him.' Whereas that is meant of defection in the church. Certain we are many fell, and therefore it is said angels in the text. That the number is great appeareth in that the world is full of these evil spirits, and a whole legion, which containeth some thousands, is said to possess one man, Luke viii. 30.

5. For the time. In the general, very soon. Therefore it is said, John viii. 44, that Satan was a murderer from the beginning;' and 1 John iii. 8, The devil sinneth from the beginning;' that is, presently after his creation; created these angels were. It was the error of Valentius and Basilides, in the age next the apostles, that they were not created, but begotten of God. These primitive monsters broached it to

the disgrace of Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God. But that they were created, see Col. i. 16, and Ps. cxlviii. 2, and created they were in time. Some of the Greek writers supposed the angels to be made before the world; but there is no ground for that, there being but one beginning of all created beings. And it is said, Before the beginning nothing was made,' John i. 3; therefore created they were the second day, with the heavens, as being of the same matter; as man was made when his seat and dwelling-place was perfected; so the angels, when their seat and place of residence was prepared. Moses mentioneth them not, because he treateth of the visible world and corporeal beings.

Now, it is certain that, being created, they sinned ere man fell, for the devil, in and by the serpent, seduced Eve,' 2 Cor. xi. 3; therefore probably they fell a little after their creation; not in the very instant, that it might appear they were not naturally evil. It is probable that some time interceded between their creation and defection, but a very little time, to show the mutability of the creature.

Use. Let me now apply what hath been spoken, and press you to consider it in your thoughts, and to consider it with observation and application to yourselves.

1. Consider it with observation, and there is scarce a matter that can be more profitably amplified in your thoughts; we have the most impartial view of things in another person. Oh! think of this dreadful instance, the fall of the angels. (1.) Observe that such excellent creatures fell. Angels themselves were created excellent but mutable. Certainly we that dwell in houses of clay, and whose foundation is in the dust,' Job iv. 19, had need to be more cautious; if they be mutable, we are weaker and more mutable. To see such glorious stars leave their station, and fall from heaven like lightning, it should

make us poor creatures tremble and look to our own standing, lest we also fall,' 1 Cor. x. 12. Self-confidence is the next way to ruin. God only cannot sin, because his act is his rule. There may be great height, strong abilities, rare accomplishments of nature and grace, and yet you see these cannot exempt us from shameful falls without the divine concurrence. The angels were the courtiers of heaven, the glory of the creation, in the first rank of the created beings, and yet they fell. Who can presume to stand when angels fall? (2.) They fell soon, a little after their creation. There is no created excellency but, if left to itself, will quickly undo itself; how soon do creature perfections fade! Surely there is no stability but in Christ. As the angels, so Adam fell a little after his creation: Ps. xlix. 12, Adam, being in honour, abideth not;' in the original, abideth not for a night;' and if it be applied to the first Adam, it implieth that he left the honour of his innocency the first day; in the morning innocent, and at night a sinner. Our new state in this regard is better than innocency, and the grace of regeneration exceedeth that of creation. The Lord would still keep the creature depending; our estate in Christ only is sure, because there our strength lieth in another. [115] Let us then work out our salvation with fear and trembling.' If angels fell, and Adam fell, when they had no such mixed nature and divided principles as we have, what will become of us? Neither man nor angel can be kept without a surety; and unless Christ be continually present with his own gifts, there is no standing. (3.) They fell dreadfully, and from angels became devils, exercising theft, lying, envy, murder towards men. The best things corrupted become worst; as no vinegar so tart as that which is made of the sweetest wine. When men sin against light and grace they become cruel: The revolters are profound to make slaughter,' saith the prophet, Hosea v. 2. After

profession the fall is most desperate: Their latter end is worse than their beginning,' 2 Peter ii. 20. What a malice have these evil angels now against God and man! they go about seeking whom they may devour. None so bad as apostates. (4.) Their fall made way for ours. By this means there came to be a tempter in the world. The fall of angels occasioned the fall of man, and the fall of man the coming of Christ. Do but go home with reverence, and observe how, by the bare permission of God, the divine decrees were accomplished, and wonder at the purity of that unspotted providence that is conversant about sin and evil, but not conscious to it. The angels led the way, and man followed, and so occasion was given for the discovery of the manifold wisdom of God' to men and angels, Eph. iii. 10. (5.) So many fell as were not elected by God. There was election and reprobation among the angels. Among the most glorious creatures God would show the liberty of his counsels; not only amongst men, the lower sort of rational creatures, but among angels. Therefore the apostle speaketh of elect angels,' 1 Tim. v. 21. Why should clay murmur when gold is refused? If some of the angels were appointed to be vessels of dishonour,' who art thou that repliest upon God,' antapokrino'menos? Rom. ix. 20, that will be disputing the sovereignty of God, and ask the reason why he giveth grace to some and not to others? Wonder at it till thou canst understand it. Disputare vis mecum? mirare mecum, et clama, O altitudo! [116] God's decrees are hard meat, not easily digested by carnal reason. A proud creature cannot endure to hear of God's sovereignty; it awakeneth our security to hear of a distinction in the counsels of God, and that grace runneth in a narrower channel than whole mankind. Do but consider; amongst the angels some are passed by and others confirmed. And who art thou, O man, that repliest? (6.) In the election of angels, pardoning mercy is not so much glorified as in the election and calling of men; [117] then

was grace shown but not mercy; none of the fallen angels were saved, but fallen man is called to grace in Christ. We were all in our blood' when God said live;' the whole lump and mass of mankind was fallen. Probably, next to the free counsels of God, that was the reason the whole human nature fell; but not the whole angelical nature, but only a part of it, so that the kind itself needed not to be repaired. Their sins argued more malice because of the height of their understanding; they sinned without a tempter. But the reason of reasons is, the will and gracious good pleasure of God, who was willing to show pardoning mercy to us, and not to them; the good angels had confirmation, but we redemption; we are reconciled, they continued: love after a breach made is more remarkable. (7.) From the sin in general by which they fell. It was by pride. See the danger of this sin; it always goeth before falling. The angels lost their holiness out of a desire of greatness; they would be over all and under none; it is dangerous when men mind rather to be great than good. In scripture we have two notable instances of the fall by pride, and our restoration by humility. The angels fell by pride and aspiring, and Christ restored mankind by being humble, lowly, and submitting himself even to the death of the cross. Adam would be as God, and so ruined us; and Christ, that was God, became as man, and so saved us. To counter work Satan, he layeth aside the glory of his Godhead; he layeth aside the glory of his Godhead and puts on a humble garb, saving us not by power, but by suffering. Well, then, look upon pride as the sure fore runner of a fall. (8.) Observe, the particular fact is uncertain, though the general sin may be known; as how this pride was discovered, whether in a thought, or by some bold attempt, is not known; it doth not so much pertain to edification and salvation to know their sin, as to know our own. The scriptures direct us to look inward; it is more for our profit to keep out Satan's power

than to know the circumstances of his fall; let us not fall with him. Peter would know John's end, but Christ rebuketh him, What is that to thee? follow thou me,' John xxi. 20-22. We betray our duties by our curiosity; surely we should be more at home, and look to our beam, that we may not ascite others before the chair of censure, but ourselves before the tribunal of conscience. (9.) Observe, that the first sin that ever was, was a punishment to itself: They kept not their first estate.' The sin is expressed in such a phrase as doth imply their loss. Duty hath its reward in its mouth, as the sacks of the patriarchs their moneys; so sin its punishment. Never think that you shall get anything by offending God; you do but defile, and debase, and degrade yourselves from your own excellency when you sin. It is hell enough to turn away from God, and misery enough to pollute and stain his image in our souls. The fall of the angels is described to be a departure from their own happiness.

2. Consider it with application to yourselves. First, apply it for humiliation. We left te`n arche`n, our first estate,' as well as the angels: God made man upright, but they sought out many inventions,' Eccles. vii. 29. Read your own guilt and apostasy in the sin of the angels; usually the page is whipped to show the prince's fault, but here the princes and noblest part of the world are set out to us for examples, that in their ruin and dreadful fall we might understand our own. Do but observe the parable; they had arche`n, an original estate of happiness and holiness, and so we; they fell soon, so we; they fell by pride, so we: the angelical fall is our glass; we are a kind of devils, and apostates from God. They were driven out of heaven, so we out of paradise; they are punished with darkness, and so we. Secondly, Apply it for caution; there is a new beginning in Christ. The apostle saith, Heb. iii. 14, We are made partakers of Christ, if we hold te`n

arche`n, the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end.' If we should break with God again upon this new stock, there will be no more sacrifice for sin. Faith, which is the gift of God's grace, is the beginning and root of a new life in Christ. If we should forfeit this, we cannot expect God will deal with us any more.

We are now come to the phrases that imply their punishment, and that we made to be twofold--present and future. The first part of the present punishment is poena damni, their loss, implied in that clause, leaving their own habitation, in which their guilt is further intimated; for the apostle here maketh it to be their act, but Peter in the parallel place maketh it God's act: 2 Peter ii. 4, God spared not his angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell.' Without further diversion we may take up the point thus:--

Obs. That the apostate angels, upon their sin and fall, departed from that place of happiness and glory which before they enjoyed. So Rev. xii. 8, Their place was found no more in heaven, and the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.' That scripture, I confess, is mystical, and speaketh of the overcoming of Satan in this present world, and casting him out of the church, which is there expressed by heaven, as the world by earth. For I observe in that book the church is some times expressed by terms suitable to the Judaical state. So in Rev. xi. 2, the church is called the temple, and the world the court; and sometimes by the celestial state, and so the church is called heaven, and the world earth. But, however, there is a plain allusion to Satan's first fall from heaven as the ground of these expressions, and therefore I may use that place as a proof in this matter. That you may understand the loss of the angels, give me leave to lay down these

propositions:--(1.) The place of their innocency was heaven, round about the throne of God, where the good angels do continually behold his face,' and stand before him,' Dan. vii. 10. In such a blessed place and in such blessed company was their oikete'rion, their abode or habitation. When God disposed the several creatures into proper mansions and places of abode, he took the angels into his own train and glorious attendants, that they might still be with him; other creatures were his servants, these his courtiers, that is, his household and ordinary servants, that were to attend as in his chamber of presence. (2.) In this place they were to enjoy God and glorify God; their happiness was to enjoy God, their duty to glorify him; there they behold his face, Mat. xviii. 10, for vision and sight of God is the happiness of rational creatures, and therefore our happy estate is expressed by beholding him face to face,' 1 Cor. xiii. 14, and David saith, Ps. xvi. 11, In thy presence,' or in thy face is fulness of joy.' In heaven, then, did God manifest himself to them; there they were to applaud his counsels, receive his commands, to love God with the most perfect embraces of their will, and to fulfil his commandments, hearkening to the voice of his word,' (3.) From this place they are now driven into the lower parts of the world,' as being a place more fit for sin and misery. That the place into which they are driven is the bottom and centre of the earth cannot be shown out of scripture; rather the contrary, for sometimes they are said to fly up and down in the air, and therefore is Satan called the prince of the power of the air,' Eph. ii. 3, and the other devils, principalities and spiritual wickednesses in high places,' Eph. vi. 12. They aspire to get as high as they can, but they can get no further than the regions of the air; and sometimes they are said to compass the earth to and fro,' Job i. 7. The earth is Satan's walk and circuit, where he seeks to do

mischief, and sometimes they are in the sea, Mat. viii. 32, for as yet they are not in that prison and place of torments where they shall abide for ever under the wrath of the Lord. Therefore when Christ checketh their power in the world, they expostulate with him, Jesus, thou Son of God, art thou come to torment us before our time?' Mat. viii. 29, and besought him that he would not cast them into the great deep;' by which some understand the final place of their residence and torments, even the lowest place of the world, most remote from the highest heavens, which place as yet they have not entered. But how is it said that they are already cast down into hell,' 2 Peter ii. 4, tartarosas? I answer--That expression doth only note the dreadfulness of their fall, from so glorious a mansion to such a place of misery; and because wherever they are, they carry their own hell with them, though by God's permission they are as yet suffered to remain in the air or earth. (4) Departing from heaven, they departed from all the happiness and glory which they enjoyed there, namely, that light which they had in their understandings to behold God, that power in their wills to love and serve him; instead of which they are filled with darkness and malice, and become the irreconcileable enemies of God and man. As to their light, their gracious knowledge is quite extinct, their natural knowledge much eclipsed, and their experimental knowledge not enough to engage their hearts to God. As to their integrity and holiness, instead of a will to love and serve God, there are nothing but obstinate purposes to do evil, and endeavours to hinder the glory of God and the good of man, 1 Peter v. 8, lest we should enjoy that happiness which he hath left. Hence those titles given them in scripture, as devil, Rev. xii. 9, which signifieth a slanderer; Satan, which signifieth an enemy; the tempter, Mat. iv. 1, because he daily soliciteth us to evil; o po'neros, the evil one, Mat. v., being full of

wickedness himself, he maketh it his study and care to propagate it in others; Belial, 2 Cor. vi. 15, unprofitable, as good for nothing; apollu'on the destroyer, because he worketh mischief; the old serpent, Rev. xii. 6, because under the shape of the serpent he poisoned Eve. As to their power, it is much broken and limited; they are held in the chains of providence; they could not do hurt to the herd of swine without permission, Luke viii. 26. (5.) Though they have lost much of the glory and power annexed to their habitation, yet many tokens of the divine image do as yet remain in them. Holiness is, as we said, utterly lost--he sinneth from the beginning,' 1 John iii. 8, that is, doth nothing else but sin; and Aquinas saith well, Hoc est angelis casus, quod hominibus mors--their fall into sin to them is as death to us; but now in other things they have much left; as man after his fall is like a drifted picture, and had only enough left to show what he once was, so the angels, though they are much fallen from the excellency of their nature, yet there is enough left to show that once they were glorious creatures. That which remaineth may be referred to two heads--their great cunning and active power. (1.) Their knowledge and cunning is great; they have much natural and experimental knowledge, so as they can discern hidden causes and virtues which escape the flight of man's reason and understanding; they know how to apply active to passive things, can guess notably at future events; but as for a certain knowledge of them, unless of such things as depend upon necessary causes, that is proper to God, and accordingly he challengeth it: Isa. xii. 23, Show the things that are to come, that we may know that ye are gods,' &c. Therefore the devil's oracles were either false or doubtful, as 1 Kings xxii. 16. Great skill in arts and tongues they have, as appeareth by their teaching those things with wonderful facility to those that have familiarity with them. In divine things they know

enough of God and his justice to feel a horror impressed upon themselves, [118] James ii. 19; Luke iv. 34; Acts xix. 15. Besides they are of wonderful sagacity to judge of men's hearts by the gestures, the motion of the blood and spirits, and other such external signs, for directly they do not know the thoughts; that is the privilege of God.

(2.) Their power is great still, though limited, so that it cannot be exercised but when and where and as God will. They are able to raise tempests, to bring fire from heaven, as they did to ruin Job's house and children, Job i.; they can deceive with lying miracles, but true miracles can only be wrought by a divine power. Being of much sagacity and skill in the secrets of nature, they may poison the air, destroy the bodies of men, infest and trouble beasts and cattle; in short, do all that lieth within the compass of a natural cause where God permitteth. Again, they may possess the bodies of men, hinder the godly in the execution of their duty; overrule the spirits of wicked men, and act and stir them up to wrath, lust, filthiness, Eph. ii. 3, besot them with error, &c.: it would require a distinct discourse to open this power to you. They cannot create new beings, nor raise dead bodies, nor compel the will of man; they can do mira, but not miracula, &c. Let me now come to observe somewhat of practical concernment from what hath been spoken.

1. That God hath proper places where the creatures shall perform their duty and enjoy their happiness. As the angels had heaven, which was i'dion oikete'rion, their proper place, so Adam had paradise, and the saints the church. It is misery enough to be thrown out of that place where God manifesteth himself; he that was cast out of the church was given up to Satan,' 1 Cor. v. 5. In the church Christ ruleth; in the world, Satan: it is good to keep to the shepherd's tents, Cant. i. 8. The angels left their first estate' at the same time that they lost

their own habitation.' It is dangerous to leave our own place, to be cast out of the congregations of the faithful, where God dwelleth and is glorified: He inhabiteth the praises of Israel,' Ps. xxii. 3; that is, in the church, where he hath praise and we have benefit: the church is the gate of heaven,' Gen. xxviii. 17; where God is, there heaven is. Cain himself could bewail his misery in being turned out from the church; he had the whole earth before him, but, saith he, I shall be hid from thy face,' Gen. iv. 14; that is, I am turned out from the place of thy worship, and where thy name is called upon. It is sad to be banished from the Lord's gracious presence.

2. Sin depriveth us of God's presence; this is the wall of separation between us and God: Isa. lix. 2, Your sins have separated,' &c. It not only provoketh God to stand at a distance from us, but worketh a strangeness in us, and maketh us shy of his presence; it cast the angels out of heaven, Adam out of Paradise, Cain out of the church. Well, then, when you are tempted to folly, bethink with yourselves: God could not endure the sight of angels when once they were defiled with sin; if I should yield to this temptation, I should never endure God, nor he me; this will either cause the Spirit to leave me, or me to leave the throne of grace; guilty souls cannot sustain the presence of God, and God doth not own the presence of guilty sinners. Peter said, Luke v. 8, Depart from me, for I am a sinful man;' and God saith, Depart from me into everlasting torments,' Mat. xxv.

3. Observe again, Jude maketh it their act, and Peter God's act. Jude saith, they left their own habitation,' and Peter, God cast them down:' and punishments are voluntarily contracted, founded upon some act of ours. God may pass by a creature out of his mere will, but he damneth not till we provoke him. First there is a voluntary aversion from God, and then God turneth away from us: Hosea xiii. 9, O Israel! thou hast

destroyed thyself.' Our ruin is caused by the free motion of our own wills. God punisheth not willingly, and as delighting in our destruction: we sin, and so freely depart from our own happiness; we leave and then he casteth down.

4. God casteth Satan out of heaven. Do you imitate your heavenly Father; cast Satan out of your hearts. Who would entertain him whom heaven hath spewed out? It is said, Rev. xii. 8, That Satan and his angels found no more place in heaven.' Oh! then, give him not place to dwell in your hearts, Eph. iv. 17; do not entertain wrathful or lustful motions. God decreed that the evil angels should be cast out of heaven, and Christ died that they might be cast out of our hearts: John xii. 31, Now shall the prince of this world be cast out.' Oh! let him not erect a new heaven and empire in your souls! His great aim is, now he cannot get into heaven, to dwell in the hearts of men.

5. Angels, creatures of the highest excellency, are not spared when they sin: 2 Peter ii. 4, God spared not the angels,' &c. Wonder at the patience of the great God to us sinners. If a king be angry with his offending nobles, should not the scullions tremble? How come we to be of this side of hell? Go home and adore that grace that hath kept you out of the chains of darkness: Lam. iii. 22, It is of the Lord's mercy that we are not consumed,' not swallowed up quick, not cast down to hell. If the angels in the very infancy of their creation were so soon punished for the first offence, Lord, what didst thou see in us, that, after so many offences, we should be yet alive? It is mercy, pardoning mercy, that giveth us our beings; we fail not because compassions fail not.

6. Angels were forced to leave their habitation; when they changed their nature, they changed their estate. Let all sinners tremble. Consider the instance, and you will see that no dignity and worth of

the creature is of any avail, nothing can keep off the strokes of vengeance but the blood of Jesus Christ. They were angels, glorious creatures, their sin but one, and probably that in thought; yet how dreadful is their punishment! Cast out of heaven, kept in chains of darkness for a severer vengeance! Oh! then, how should we tremble that have drunk in iniquity like water!' Surely God is the same, he doth no less hate pride, obstinacy, and contempt of his grace now, than he did in times past: God is but one,' Gal. iii. 20; he acteth according to the same tenor of justice now as heretofore, &c.

7. From the word oikete'rion, their own place,' observe the true dwelling-place and rest is heaven; it was the habitation of the angels, and the rest of the saints. Oh! long for your home, let your hearts and your hopes be there; enter upon your eternal inheritance by degrees. The angels left their habitations, do you be always travel ling thither; let your hearts be in heaven, Col. iii. 1, your conversations be in heaven ere your persons, Phil. iii. 20. There are good angels still, blessed companions: Heb. xii. 22, 23, An innumerable company of angels and spirits of just men perfected.' A heathen could see out of a glimpse of the soul's immortality, O praeclarum illum diem, cum ad illud animarum concilium coetumque proficiscar. There you shall see the vacant rooms of the apostate angels occupied by the saints. Say, Woe is me, that my pilgrimage is prolonged, Ps. cxx. 5.

8. They were cast from heaven into this world. Do but look upon the world in a right notion. Satan, that was not fit for heaven, is cast out into the earth, as a meet place for misery and torment: he is called The ruler of the darkness of this world,' Eph. vi. 12, and The god of this world,' 2 Cor. iv. 4. It is punishment enough to the apostate angels to be cast out into the world: the world is the devil's workhouse and prison; one calleth it Satan's diocese. Who would be in

love with a place of bondage and punishment?

9. The devil and his angels are in the world; let us be the more cautious; he compasseth the earth to and fro,' no place can secure you from his temptation; he is everywhere ravening for the prey with an indefatigable and unwearied diligence, 1 Peter v. 8. Let us look about us: Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea, for the devil is come down to you,' Rev. xii. 12. Wherever you are, Satan is near you; the world is full of devils. When you are in the shop, the devil is there to fill your hearts with lying and deceit, as he did the heart of Ananias, Acts v.; when you are in your closets, and when you have shut the door upon you, you do not shut out Satan, he can taint a secret duty; when you are in the house of God, ministering before the Lord, Satan is at your right hand ready to resist you,' Zech. iii. 1. He is ready either to pervert your aims, or to divert your thoughts. We had need keep the heart in a humble, watchful, praying frame. God hath cast out the angels out of heaven, and now they are here upon earth, tempting the sons of men to folly and inconvenience. Be watchful, the world is the devil's chessboard; you can hardly move back or forth, but he is ready to attack you by some temptation.

10. When grace is abused, our dejection is usually according to the degree of our exaltation; the angels from heaven are cast down to hell, the highest in the rank of creatures are now made lowest; corruptions of the best things are most noisome: Thou Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, art now brought down to hell,' Mat. xi. 23. It was one of the chief cities of Galilee, and where our Saviour usually conversed. It is a kind of heaven to enjoy Christ in the ordinances, but now to slight this mercy will bring such confusions and miseries as are a kind of hell to you; slighting of grace, of all sins weigheth heaviest in God's balance.

11. Spiritual judgments are most severe, and to be given up to obstinacy in sin is the sorest of judgment: it is diabolical to continue in sin; the angels left their habitation, and what followed? they lost their holiness.

12. Loss of happiness is a great judgment, it is hell enough to want God. The first part of the sentence, depart from me,' Mat. xxv. 41, is most dreadful; loss of heaven is the first part of the angels' punishment. We in effect say now, Depart from us,' Job. xxi. 14, but God will then say, Depart from me;' ye shall see my face no more, &c. Thus we have dispatched the first part of the angels' punishment, their loss; we now come to the other part, their poena sensûs, their punishment of sense or pain, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness; where there is an allusion to the state of malefactors or condemned men, who are kept in prison till execution. Now the evils of a prison are two:--(1.) The darkness of the place; (2.) The hard usage of the evil-doer; suitably to which the apostle used a double notion:--(1.) They are reserved in everlasting chains; (2.) Under darkness.

I begin with the first part, in everlasting chains; whence two notes:--(1.) That the angels are kept in chains; (2.) That those chains are everlasting.

1. They are kept in chains. But what chains can hold angels? can spirits be bound with irons? I answer--They are spiritual chains, suitable to the spiritual nature of angels; such as these:--

[1.] Guilt of conscience, which bindeth them over to judgment; the consciences of wicked angels know that they are adjudged to dam nation for their sin. This is a sure chain, for it fasteneth the judgment so as you cannot shake it off; it is bound and tied upon us by the hand of God's justice. The condition of a guilty sinner is frequently compared

to a prisoner, Isa. xlii. 7; Isa. xlix. 9; Isa lxi. 1; and sin to a prison wherein we are shut up, Rom. xi. 32; Gal. iii. 22; and guilt to chains or bonds laid upon us by God the judge, Prov. v. 22; Lam. i. 14.

[2.] Their obstinacy in sinning. They are fallen so as they cannot rise again, they are called wickednesses,' Eph. vi. 12, as sinning with much malice and obstinacy; as if you should say wickedness itself. The devil's sin is as the sin against the Holy Ghost;' a malicious, obstinate, spiteful opposition against the kingdom of Christ, such a hatred against God and Christ that they will not repent and be saved; their despair begetteth despite, and being hopeless of relief, are without purpose of repentance. They do, foolish creatures, add sin to sin, and harden themselves in an evil way, which is as a chain to hold them in God's prison, till their final damnation; see 2 Thes. ii. 11, 12, where error and wilful persisting in disobedience is made to be God's prison, wherein reprobate creatures are held till their punishment be consummate.

[3.] Utter despair of deliverance; they are held under their torment by their own thoughts, as a distressed conscience is said to be bound up, Isa. lxi. 1; to them there remaineth nothing but a certain fearful looking for judgment and fiery indignation,' Heb. x. 27; release they cannot look for, more judgment they do expect: Mat. viii. 29, Art thou come to torment us before our time?' Their prison door is locked with God's own key, and as long as God sitteth upon the throne they cannot wrest the key out of his hands.

[4.] God's power and providence, by which the angelical strength is bridled and overmastered, so as they cannot do what they would. Thus Rev. xx. 2, Satan is said to be bound up for a thousand years,' that is, in the chains of God's power, which are sometimes straiter and sometimes looser. The devil was fain to ask leave to enter into the

herd of swine, Mat. viii.

[5.] The chains of God's eternal decree. As there is a golden chain, the chain of salvation, which is carried on from link to link, till the purposes of eternal grace do end in the possession of eternal glory, so there is an iron chain of reprobation, which begins in God's own voluntary preterition, and is carried on in the creature's voluntary apostasy, and endeth in their just damnation; and when once we are shut up under these bars, there is no opening,' Job xii. 14.

2. These chains are eternal chains, because the wicked angels stand guilty for ever, without hope of recovery or redemption. Every natural man is in chains, but there is hope to many of the prisoners. Christ saith, Go forth;' but those chains upon the evil angels are for ever and ever: now ad custodiam, to keep them and hold them in their lost estate; hereafter ad poenam, they are continued upon them as a part of their final punishment, when much of the liberty which now they have shall be abridged.

From hence observe these practical inferences:--

1. That sins are as it were bonds and chains. A wicked man is in bondage here and hereafter; [119] now in snares and then in chains, here taken captive by Satan in his snares, 2 Tim. ii. 26, and hereafter bound up with him in chains. Sin itself is a bondage, and hell a prison. Were there nothing in sin but the present slavery, it is enough to dissuade us; but alas! this is not all, there are not only snares but chains. In the fall of the angels, how many notions are there offered to us to discover the evil of sin! They left their beginning,' and lost their habitation,' and then chains of darkness.' He that hath a mind to be a beast or a devil let him be a sinner. If you mean to quench your reason, to eclipse the glory of your creation, to disturb the quiet of your spirits, and instead of calmness and serenity of

conscience, to bring in horror and confusion; if you mean to enthral and captivate your souls to every base affection, and to be at the command of every corrupt desire, then go on freely, as you do, in sinning against God. But alas! the present thraldom is nothing to what is future; all the sins that you commit will be as so many chains, binding you over to an eternal and just damnation. The good angels are at liberty to serve God, when the evil angels are shut up in the prison of their own obstinacy and wickedness. Remember this when you are convinced of a sin which you cannot leave, and fear lest it prove a chain of everlasting darkness.

2. Those chains and bonds can never be broken by us. The angels cannot break them themselves, and Christ will not, for their day of grace is past. Every one's chains would be eternal if Christ did not loose them, and open the prison-door to poor captives,' Isa. lxi. 1. This is our advantage above the angels, that a year of liberty is proclaimed to us, and an opening of the prison to them that are bound.' Christ himself was bound with our chains. The prophet saith, Isa. liii. 8, He was taken from prison and from judgment.' He was in prison that we might go free.' If the judge had given us up to the officer, and the officer had cast us into prison,' how long would it have been ere we had payed the utmost farthing'? Luke xii. 58. Others that reject the mercy offered in Christ can never wrest themselves out of the hands of justice, but do for ever remain under the power and wrath of the living God, Heb. x. 31.

3. The devil is in chains, a cruel spirit, but under bonds. His power is less than his will and malice; he is wrathful that we may not be secure; he is chained that we may not despair; he hath no power but what is given him from above; and when God putteth any of his servants into Satan's hands he keepeth Satan in his own hands. If you be in

Satan's hands for your exercise, remember Satan is in God's hands for your comfort and safety. He had not power over the herd of swine without leave: Mat. viii. 31, Suffer me,' &c.; so Luke xxii. 31, he could not sift Peter till he had a commission: Satan hath desired,' &c., Job i. 2; ii. 7. Satan could not so much as touch Job's estate or skin till leave obtained. Nay, he could not deceive Ahab, a wicked man, till God said Go, I Kings xxii. 21, 22; he is but God's executioner: He sent his evil angels among them,' Ps. lxxviii. 49. God gave commission for the plagues of Egypt, and then the evil angels had power to execute them. The godly need not fear Satan as a disobedient angel; he is cast into the chains of God's justice and power; and as head of the kingdom of darkness, his power is more restrained by the death of Christ, John xii. 31.

4. Observe how weak the creatures are when God marcheth in judgment against them. Guilt of conscience is one of the fallen angels' chains. If God will but arm our own thoughts against us, he needeth not bring forces from without, there is enough in that to sink us into hell. The law needeth not bring brimstone from heaven to burn sinners, nor open the mouth of the great deep to drown them, nor shatter the frame of nature about our heads. Alas! we cannot bear up under the burden of our own consciences, or the weight of our own grief; when he layeth his finger upon the conscience, who can bear it? The angels excel in strength, and yet the impressions of honour [120] laid upon them are too hard for them to grapple withal: Prov. xviii. 14, A wounded spirit who can bear?' as if he had said, I challenge all the world to bring me a man that is able to deal with his own conscience, when God armeth it against him.

5. That spiritual judgments of all others are most secure. To have sin punished with obstinacy and hardness in sinning this, is nothing but to

have the devil's chains laid upon us, a sad intimation that we are given up to chains of darkness. Frogs and lice and hailstones were but soft judgments to Pharaoh's hard heart; unless God should send us quick into hell, there cannot heavier judgment befall us; nay, certainly it were better to be given up to hell torments, if there could be any expectation of deliverance, than to be given up to a spirit of sinning, for there is no end of that. Say then, Lord, whatever judgment thou bringest upon me, bring not thy heavy judgment of a hard heart; it is better by far that you should live miserably than sin freely without remorse. Bat what sins bring on this spiritual judgment? I answer--(1.) An unthankful abuse of God's gifts; the devils had a glorious and excellent nature, but they were not thankful. Observe it when you will, you will find it true that no man was ever punished with hardness of heart, but some former merciful dispensation was abused. The heathens were not thankful for the light of nature, and therefore God gave them up to vile affections.' Rom. i. 22, 24; others received not the love of the truth,' and therefore God gave them up to believe a lie, that they might be damned,' 2 Thes. ii. 11, 12. The very sin against the Holy Ghost' is so called because it is a despiting grace received, or a devilish opposing of the grace and supernatural work of the Spirit, by which the mind is convinced of the truth. (2.) Sinning against the light; that was Satan's sin, who was full of light, and sinned in the very face of God; and it is his sin still, malice having only put out the light of prudence, but not of his understanding, so that he knowingly sinneth; so wicked men imprison the truth in unrighteousness.' Rom. i. 18, and then God giveth them up to the sway of their own lusts and passions. There is more of malice in sins against light; you laugh at Christ before his face, outdare heaven and conscience: Esther vii. 8, Will he force the queen before my face?' &c.

(3.) Sinning with the light; when malice sets wit a-work (as it doth in the devils) against God and the church; it is satanical to be wise to do evil, to make no other use of our parts than to plot wickedness, pervert the truth, and undermine religion: Jer. iv. 22, They are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge.' When you make religion yield to policy, or bend policy to ruin religion, then your wisdom hath undone you,' Isa. xlvii. 10. (4.) Malice against God and goodness; this is Satan's direct sin. When men will not only be wicked themselves, but adversaries and malicious opposers of all that is good, this is not only to be sinners but Satans: Acts xiii. 10, O thou child of the devil, and enemy of all goodness.' Cain, that hated his brother because his works were righteous, was the devil's patriarch. (5.) A sottish obstinacy and wilfulness, when will and humour is lifted up against conviction, Jer. ii. 25, xliv. 18; they will not, because they will not. Foolish wilfulness meeteth with penal hardness; he that will wink shall not see the sun, shine it never so brightly; such men do but lay Satan's chains on their own will and understanding, (6.) A senseless security, notwithstanding the growth and increase of sin, when men lose all feeling and restraint, and grow more wicked but less tender, Eph. iv. 19; and so men sin freely, foully, wax worse and worse, and add new links to the chains of darkness.

6. There is little reason that we should adore him whom God holdeth in chains of darkness, that we should exalt him whom the Lord hath cast down, and make a god of him who hath made himself a devil. All sins do, as it were, set the crown upon Satan's head; these especially--(1.) False worship: Satan is the head of idolaters; if the sacrifice was offered in an unbecoming manner, God saith it was a sacrifice offered unto devils, Lev. xvii. 7. In all false worships the devil is served either directly or obliquely, either by consequence or in the intention

of the worshippers; thence those expressions, table of devils,' 1 Cor. x. 21; They sacrificed to devils and not to God,' Deut. xxxii. 17. You gratify Satan if you be not right in worship; those among Christians that worshipped towards an idol of gold and silver are said to worship devils,' Rev. ix. 20. Satan is, saith Synesius, eidolochare`s, a lover of images, and a patron of false worship. (2.) Worldly conversation: he is called the god of this world,' 2 Cor. iv. 4. Sensual, covetous, proud men are Satan's votaries, at his beck and pleasure; and will you be one of the number? When Christ came to dissolve Satan's works,' 1 John iii. 8, will you uphold them? (3.) Base fear of wicked men: you do but fear the devil in them: Rev. ii. 10, Fear not; behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison.' He that will deny the truth for fear of men, preferreth the devil before God. (4.) Being of the faction of the wicked: there is a corrupt party in the world, over whom Satan usurpeth empire and domination: Rulers of the darkness of this world,' Eph. vi. 12; Col. i. 13. Cry not up a confederacy with these; take heed how your soul entereth into that secret. I confess it is ingeniousness, a matter of Christian skill and art, to find out the snare that we may escape it. Generally they are the antichristian dark part of the world, such as are led with a blind zeal and rage to oppose the interest of righteousness, such as oppose the gospel with rage and lies: John viii. 44, Ye are of your father the devil, and his lusts will ye do.' Many that deny Satan yet may be of his faction and party.

We are now come to the second part of the punishment of pain, taken from the other inconvenience of a prison, hupo zophon, under darkness, in allusion to malefactors who are cast into dungeons, where, be sides the load of irons, the very darkness of the place concurreth to their misery. Light is pleasant, as giving us the sight of what is grateful in the world, of which when we are deprived, the mind, like a mill,

falleth and worketh upon itself. Peter saith in chains of darkness,' as implying that God did bind them fast with their darkness and horror as with a chain; but our apostle here seemeth to make them two distinct parts of their torment, as certainly it is a more full description of it. Well, then, the proposition will be, that the apostate angels are kept under darkness.

Obs. Darkness in scripture represented three things:--First, ignorance; secondly, sin; thirdly, misery; as light, the contrary quality, implieth knowledge, holiness, and happiness. Because light discovereth all things, it is put for knowledge; because of all bodily qualities it is most pure and unmixed, therefore it is put for holiness; because it is wonderfully pleasing and delightful to sense, therefore it is put for glory. So contrariwise darkness, which is nothing else but the absence and privation of light, signifieth ignorance, John iii. 19; sin, 1 Peter ii. 9; misery, Ps. cvii. 10. Now all these three make way for one another; ignorance for sin, and sin for misery; the understanding being the great wheel of the soul, if it be not right nothing can be right, Mat. vi. 22. Ignorance maketh us stumble upon sin, and by sin we fall into the pit of everlasting darkness.

If you ask what kind of darkness is intended here? I answer--Though all may be implied, yet chiefly the darkness of misery is here intended, they being cast down from the light and glory of the highest heavens into dark and obscure habitations, where they want the sight of God and the light of his countenance. As when the sun is gone there is nothing but darkness in the world, so being banished out of the presence of God, they are fitly said to be held under darkness; for as the sun is to the corporeal world, so is God to the world of spirits, Ps. iv, 6. Now their sun is eclipsed, and by the interposition of the dark cloud of their sin and obstinacy, they cannot have the least comfortable

glimpse and fruition of God; to which also may be added the horrible apprehension of their loss, and that terror and discomfort that lieth upon them, for they have only so much light left as serveth to increase their torment. I confess it is disputed by divines whether the devils can grieve for the loss of the light of God's countenance, or the want of the beatifical vision; and the ground of doubting is, be cause there is in the devils an extreme averseness, enmity, and hatred of God and his glory; but certainly, as they are rational creatures, they cannot but be sensible of their loss, as also the damned spirits are, and so great a loss of happiness (for that is the consideration under which they are sensible of it) must needs breed horror and torment. They do not mourn for the absence of God as the saints do, out of a principle of holiness, and because God is lovely in himself, but as profitable to them; and this sense, as it is accompanied with despair, so with blasphemy and hatred of God. Surely every part of the sentence that is pronounced upon wicked men is fitted to beget terror in them; and therefore depart from me' is apprehended as a misery, as well as go into everlasting torments.' Add further to their darkness that despair that is upon them, and fearful looking for of the fiery indignation of the Lord, which desperate sorrow is expressed by utter darkness and gnashing of teeth,' Mat. xxii. 13.

Let me now come to some observations.

Obs. 1. Darkness is the devils' punishment, the highest misery of the highest rank of reasonable creatures. Oh! why should we love that which is the misery of the fallen angels? as our Saviour speaketh of some that love darkness rather than light,' John iii. 19; that is, error rather than truth, lusts rather than Christ, ignorance rather than knowledge. It is one of the saddest arguments of man's dreadful fall, that he is in love with his own misery. We should hate sin, and we hate

the light that reproveth it: ignorant people love a foolish ministry, God's faithful witnesses are their torment, Rev. xi. 10. The carnal world would fain lie down upon the bed of ease and sleep; light is troublesome: those that let them alone are their idols and darlings; the blind lead the blind, and both fall into the ditch.' It is evil not to know the will of God; it is doubly evil when we desire not to know; the one sort err in their minds, the other in their hearts. Spiritual darkness is far worse than bodily. When Elymas was stricken blind he desired somebody to lead him by the hand,' Acts xiii. 11. In such a case we count our happiness to light upon fit guides. In spiritual darkness it is quite otherwise; we cannot endure a faithful guide: The prophets prophesy lies, and the people love to have it so;' a blind people are all for blind guides.

Obs. 2. Light that yieldeth us no comfort is but darkness. Satan hath knowledge left, but no comfort: James ii. 19, They believe and tremble.' The more sense they have of God's being and glory, the greater horror have they upon their spirits. It is very miserable when we have only light enough to awaken conscience, and knowledge enough to be self-condemned. To know God but not to enjoy him, that is the devils' punishment. Oh! then, never leave till your thoughts of God are sweet and comfortable, Ps. civ. 34. Satan cannot but abominate his own thoughts of God, for he cannot think of him without torment; but it is otherwise with gracious hearts; that meditation which is the devil's terror is their solace and support. God's name to them is as an ointment poured out,' Cant. i. 3, full of fragrancy and reviving. Best not, then, till you can see God with such a light as giveth you fruition and comfortable enjoyment of him: In thy light shall we see light,' Ps. xxxvi. 9; there is light in thy light, but all other light is but darkness.

Obs. 3. Do but observe the difference between God and Satan. God is light, 1 John i. 5, and Satan darkness; God dwelleth in light, and Satan is reserved in chains under darkness. The first creature that God made in the world was light, and the first gift of the Spirit is illumination; but now all Satan's aim and work is to bring in darkness, to blind the mind, 2 Cor. iv. 4; ignorance is the very foundation of his kingdom, Eph. vi. 12. Well, then, the more dark, the more like Satan. A child of God is a child of light, and what have we to do with works of darkness'? Eph. v. 11. There should be such a contrariety between you and sin as there is between God and Satan; say then, These actions would only become my night of ignorance and folly; night-work is unseemly for the day: Rom. xiii. 12, The day is at hand, let us cast off the works of darkness;' leave these things to the bats and the owls. If there be a difference and contrariety between Christ and Belial, who are the chiefs of either state, so between the persons that herd under them: What communion is there between Christ and Belial, between light and darkness?' 2 Cor. vi. 14.

Obs. 4. So much darkness as remaineth in you, so much advantage hath Satan against you. The dark part of the world is the seat of his empire: Rulers of the darkness of this world,' Eph. vi. 12. His subjects are the children of darkness,' and all the advantage that he hath over the children of light is because of the darkness that is in them: whosoever, therefore, lieth under a state of darkness is under the power of Satan. The great work of the ministry is to recover them, to turn them from darkness to light,' Acts xxvi. 18, and so from Satan to God.' Oh! the sad condition of such persons that are bound together with Satan in chains of darkness! Poor creatures, how are they hurried to and fro! from wrath to pride, from pride to lust, from lust to filthiness, from filthiness to worldliness! Oh, then, awake you that

sleep, and the Lord shall give you light,' Eph. v. 14. What a blessing is it when it can be said of us, what the apostle said of the Ephesians, Ye were darkness, but now are light in the Lord,' Eph. v. 8. As soon as you have received light and grace, you are translated out of Satan's power and kingdom, and put into the Lord's.

Obs. 5. The darkness of sin is punished with the darkness of misery The light whereby w r e are directed and perfected is the same; the state of grace is a marvellous light,' 1 Peter ii. 9, and the state of glory the inheritance of the saints in light,' Col. i. 12. So sin is but darkness begun. Hell is called utter darkness,' Mat. viii. 12, to` sko'tos to` exo'teron, a darkness beyond a darkness; as Augustine glosseth in his homilies, In tenebras ex tenebris infeliciter exclusi--the damned are but thrust out of one darkness into another, from ignorance to sin, from sin to torment. It is very observable when Solomon compareth the way of the just and the way of the wicked, he compareth the one to light, the other to darkness: Prov. iv. 18, 19, The way of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day; and the way of the wicked is as darkness.' By the rule of contraries, as one is a growing light, so the other is an increasing darkness; from twilight to starlight, from starlight to thick darkness; they quench the light of nature, choose worldly happiness, grow regardless of eternity, are hardened in their way, and at length given up to everlasting horror and confusion of faces, to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever,' 2 Peter ii. 17. Mists of error are justly punished with mists of darkness. The men there spoken of were clouds and mists in the church; and therefore the mists of eternal darkness are kept for them, as a fit and proper portion.

Obs. 6. The danger of refusing and abusing light. Those that were angels of light are now held in the chains of darkness: see it every

where made good; the blackest evening hath been sent usually after a glorious day; those that once enjoyed Noah's preaching were afterwards the spirits in prison,' 1 Peter iii. 18, 19; he that had not a wedding garment on for the feast was cast into utter darkness,' Mat. xxii. 13. Abuse of light and means and privileges will surely make our condition gloomy and uncomfortable.

Obs. 7. When we are cast out from God, nothing but darkness ensueth, utter darkness and weeping and gnashing of teeth. It is our utmost happiness to enjoy God, and it is our utmost misery to want him; the devils know it, and we shall one day know it. Pray for the light of God's countenance more than for corn, and wine, and oil, Ps. iv. 6. One glimpse of the favour of God would turn hell into heaven, and give us such a strong and sweet joy as would swallow up all kind of sorrows. It is the absence of the sun maketh night; certainly they have hard hearts that do not mourn when they have lost the sight of God: When the bridegroom is gone, then shall they mourn,' Mat. ix. 15. Alas! how the drooping hearts and withered face of nature seem to mourn for the absence of the sun; and how are all things cleared and revived at spring again! And shall not we mourn for God, the sun of the intellectual world? Pharaoh was most affrighted with the plague of darkness, Exod. x. 4. Yea, the devils themselves are sensible of the loss of the light of God's countenance: when God shutteth himself up in a cloud, let our bowels be troubled for him. Lam. iii. 44.

Obs. 8. The world in comparison of heaven is but a dark place. It is the place where the devils are cast, and they are held under darkness. It is an obscure corner of the creation, a place fit for our trial, but not for our reward. In a spiritual consideration it is but a great and vast dungeon, where we cannot have so dear [121] sight of God as else where. It is Satan's walk, a place of danger and defilement. It is much

if we can keep ourselves unspotted in such a nasty hole, James i. 27; 2 Peter ii. 20. The inheritance which is given to the saints is given to them in light,' Col. i. 12. Let us look for that, and long for that; and God dwelleth in light,' 1 Tim. vi. 16; he dwelleth there where he discovereth most of his glory, and that is in heaven.

We have done with the present punishment of the angels; we come now to that which is future, implied in these words, unto the judgment of the great day. By judgment is meant the sentence of condemnation which shall pass upon them before the eyes of the whole world, and then the consequences, which are eternal misery and torment.

Obs. 1. That at the day of judgment the punishment of the devils will be greater than it is now.

The devils' punishment is for the present great, as you have heard, but they are in expectation of greater: Mat. viii. 29, Art thou come to torment us before our time?' There is a time coming when the wrath of God shall be increased upon them, and this time is the day of judgment, the great day of the Lord, when they shall be brought forth before the tribunal of Christ and his saints. The good angels shall come as Christ's companions, and the evil angels as his prisoners. See Mat. xxv. 31; 2 Thes. i. 7, and 1 Cor. vi. 3. This is a day that will work upon their envy, thwart their pride, to see the glory of Christ, and of the good angels and the saints. After this they shall be adjudged to horrible torments. Hell is their freehold and portion, prepared for the devil and his angels,' Mat. xxv. 41. The quality and nature of their torment we cannot so easily determine, nor what that fire is that shall burn spirits; only the scripture showeth they are cast into the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone,' Rev. xxi. 8, where they shall suffer torments without end and without ease. When heaven's joys are full, then are hell's torments full also; and therefore, though for the

present they are under God's wrath, yet they do not taste the dregs of it; he exerciseth some patience towards them. They have an empire and a ministry in the world, but when all former things are done away, and Christ's glory is fully shown to the world, then will he take full vengeance of his enemies. Well, then, from hence learn:--

1. That the wicked's judgment is not as yet full. At the great day then shall it be more increased upon the union of soul and body; they shall drink the dregs of the cup of wrath unmixed,' In this life we are adding sin to sin, and in the next God will be adding torment to torment. Oh! what a sad train of judgments followeth a sinner! For the present he hath hell in his own conscience; they sip of the cup of wrath in the bondage and horrors now upon them, and at death these are more revived, and made more lively and active. But consider, after all this there is worse behind, torments insufferable, presently upon the separation, for then they are in prison, 1 Peter iii. 9, detained in a fearful expectation of further judgment: Luke xvi. 24. I am horribly tormented in this flame.' But after this, at Christ's coming to judgment, these torments are increased, and therefore the apostle speaketh as if he did not take vengeance before: 2 Thes. i. 7, He shall come in flaming fire to render vengeance,' &c; because then it is fully executed. Do not add drunkenness to thirst, lest God add to your plagues.

2. The most miserable creatures are suffered to enjoy some degree of God's patience. For the present God is patient. As to the fallen angels, sure I am to sinning man, in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt die.' The full execution of that sentence is put off to the day of judgment; reprobates are endured with much long-suffering.' Rom. ix. 22. Intermissions God gives in this life, respite to bodies till the last day. Adore his goodness, do not abuse it.

3. Origen's charity was too large, who dreamed of katha'rsion pur, a flaming river, through which all creatures were to pass, and so to be purged, and then at length to be saved, even the devils themselves; whereas they are kept for a severer judgment.

4. When you see wicked men endured, and not presently cast into hell, be not astonished; God hath a ministry for them as for the evil angels. Some are reserved to the day of judgment,' 2 Peter ii. 9; that is, their punishment is respited for the greater triumph of that day.

5. One judgment may make way for another, the chains of darkness for the judgment of the great day. Let no man please himself in that he suffereth afflictions in this world; these may be but the beginnings of sorrow. God is terrible to poor sinners as well as rich. You may be miserable here, and yet not escape in the world to come. Do not think the worst is past. Some have a double hell, such miseries here as are pledges of everlasting torments hereafter.

6. Devils fear the great day. An atheistical loose Christian is worse than Satan. He scoffeth at that at which the devil trembleth. There are atheists in the church, but there are none in hell.

7. Angels are brought to judgment. None are exempted. At the great day you shall see those glorious creatures bound with chains of darkness. The kings and captains are brought in trembling before the Lamb's throne, Rev. vi. 15, and great as well as small appear be fore that great tribunal, Rev. xx. 12.

8. The angels are plunged into the depths of hell, when saints enter into their master's joy. God loveth a returning sinner before an apostate angel.

Obs. 2. There is one point yet behind, with which I shall conclude this verse, and that is, that the day of judgment is a great day. It is so in many regards.

First, Because it is the consummate act of Christ's regal office. Of all offices, Christ's kingly office is the most eminent. Now the kingly office was never discovered with so much lustre and glory to the world as then. The eminent act of other offices do more belong to his abasement. As his oblation, an eminent act of his priestly office, was to be performed upon earth, so his prophetical office was much discharged in delivering the doctrine of the gospel whilst he was here; but of his kingly office we had but a very little glimpse during his abode upon earth, in his whipping the buyers and sellers out of the temple, and his entrance into Jerusalem, when they cried Hosanna in the streets, Mat. xxi. And now in heaven Christ is supreme; but his sovereignty lieth under a cloud and veil: All things are put under him.' But carnal sense objects, We see not as yet all things put under him,' Heb. ii. 8. But at the last day Christ will show himself to be king indeed, both in rewarding his friends, and in an absolute conquest over his enemies, which are the two great parts of his regal office. Therefore the day of judgment is called eme'ra kuri'ou, the day of the Lord,' 2 Peter iii. 10, as being the day wherein Christ shall manifest himself to be a Lord indeed: (1.) In rewarding his friends. When David was crowned at Hebron, then all that followed him in the wilderness were rewarded according to the merit of their place and service. Before they had hard service and little wages, but then were made captains of thousands, and captains of hundreds, and captains of fifties. So they that are true to the interest of Christ may meet with many a frown and hard entertainment in the world, but you will not repent of it in the day of Christ's royalty: Mat. xxv. 34, Then shall the king say,' &c. He is called the Son of man' before; but then you will find a king' rewarding all his subjects. Peter was troubled about his petty losses; Master,' saith he, we have forsaken all and followed thee.' What had

Peter to forsake? A net, a cottage, a fishing-boat. A great all! We are apt to think much of what we part with upon Christ's score. If we suffer but a disgraceful word, a small inconvenience, a frown, we presently say, What shall we have therefor?' But we need not seek another paymaster than Christ. He will not be behindhand with us when the day of payment cometh. See Mat. xix. 27, 28, en palingenesi'a, In the regeneration ye shall sit with me on thrones of glory,' &c.; that is, at the day of judgment, which is the great regeneration. When heavens are new, earth new, bodies new, souls new, all is new, then we shall be no losers by Christ. (2.) In an absolute conquest over his enemies. The stoutest faces shall then gather blackness, and the stiffest knees bow to him. There is an expression, Isa. xlv. 23, I have sworn by myself, and the words shall not return, that to me every knee shall bow, and every mouth shall swear.' Now this expression cloth concern Christ's sovereignty and full victory over his enemies; for this scripture is twice alluded unto in the New Testament, and in both places applied to Christ. The first place that I shall take notice of is Phil. ii. 10, where the apostle saith, that to Christ every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall call him Lord,' which is the same with that which is spoken in the prophet, and is there made to be the first [122] of Christ's ascension, when he was solemnly inaugurated into the kingly office; but the prophecy receiveth not its full and final accomplishment till the day of judgment. To which purpose the same scripture is cited by the apostle, Rom. xiv. 11, We shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, for it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, to me every knee shall bow, and mouth shall confess.' So that the bowing of knees or stooping of enemies is not fully accomplished till then. Christ doth now often overrule the counsels and projects of his enemies, and smite them with a sore destruction; but

there is no such crouching and trembling so sensibly now to be discerned as there will be at that day.

Secondly, The day of judgment is a great day, because great things are then done, which will appear if you consider--(1.) The preparations for that day; (2.) The day itself; (3.) The consequence of it.

1. The preparations for Christ's approach: the scripture mentioneth two--(1.) The archangel's trumpet; (2.) The sign of the Son of man.

[1.] There is that great noise and terror of the voice of the Lord, which is to be managed by some special angels, by which all the world shall be, as it were, summoned to appear before Christ's tribunal. See 1 Thes. iv. 16, and Mat. xxiv. 31. Some expound this trumpet analogically, some literally. They that expound it analogically think it signifieth the power and virtue of Christ forcing all the world to appear before his judgment-seat, which is therefore called a trumpet, because the solemn assemblies among the Jews were summoned by sound of trumpet. But why may we not take it literally, and in propriety of speech, for the audible sound of a trumpet? Sure I am at the giving of the law the voice of the trumpet was exceeding loud;' and the like may be when he cometh to take an account of our keeping the law, a sound of a trumpet, as a terrible summons to all the world, and a near sign of Christ's approach; as John Baptist was the forerunner of his first coming, who was the voice of one crying in the wilderness;' so is the arch angel at his second coming; a terrible blast there shall be, such as shall be heard all the world over, startling the dead out of their graves. Men do not hear the voice of God now, for now he speaketh by his angels or messengers, in a still voice; but then all the dead shall hear and live.

[2.] The sign of the Son of man,' spoken of Mat. xxiv. 30. What it is we certainly cannot tell, till experience manifest it. Some think a

strange star, as, at his first coming, the wise men were conducted to him by a star; others the sign of the cross, as being Christ's badge by which he is known in the world; for the great subject of the gospel is Christ crucified, called therefore the word of the cross,' and this they think shall appear in the heavens, as it did to Constantine when he went to fight against Maxentius, with this word, en touto nike'seis--by this shalt thou overcome; though, by the way, Eusebius describeth that vision as in the figure of X, the first critical letters of Christ's name. This way go many of the ancients, making the cross to be Christ's ensign and royal banner, which he will, display in the heavens; as kings, when they make their triumphant approach, have their banners carried before them. But I dare not thus dogmatise. Others, more probably, interpret it of some forerunning beams of majesty and glory, like those streaks of light before the sun be risen, which shall darken the great luminaries of the world, and strike a terror into the hearts of men, as Paul was stricken with such a terror at the sight of Christ: Acts xxvi. 13, he saw light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about him.' Notable it is, that these forerunning beams of Christ's majesty and glory are sometimes expressed by light and sometimes by fire; by light to express the comfortableness of it to the godly, as the light of the sun doth not scorch but revive and refresh; by fire, 2 Thes. i. 8, en pu'ri phlo'gos, to show the dreadfulness of it to the wicked; to them it is as flames and devouring burnings.

2. Let us consider the day itself, and the great things done therein. It is a day of congregation of all mankind; there Adam may see all his posterity at once; but especially is it a day of congregation in respect of the saints, who are now scattered in divers countries, towns, houses, where God hath any work and service for them, but then

shall meet together in one assembly and rendezvous, called, Ps. i. 6, the great congregation of the just,' as the wicked shall be herded together like straws and sticks bound in a bundle to set one another on fire, drunkards together, and adulterers together: They shall be bound in bundles,' &c., Mat. xiii. 41, and so increase one another's torment. So shall the godly meet in a congregation, and never separate more. Here the godly are dispersed as the stars are scattered throughout the firmament; here they live intermingled with wicked men--Jacob's cattle and Laban's cattle together; but then the sheep shall be separated from the goats, and be all drawn into a body by themselves. Again, it is a day of manifestation; the Lord's decrees and counsels are manifested. Creation and providence are but subservient means in order to the triumphs of this day, that the glory of his grace may be advanced in the salvation of the elect, and the glory of his justice in the punishment of the wicked, who, upon this account, are said to be made for the day of evil,' Prov. xvi. 4, where the Holy Ghost pitcheth upon that part of the decree which is hardest to be digested, the making of the wicked for the glory of the Lord's justice in that day. The wisdom of God in the courses of his providence is then manifested, for the story of the world is brought before the saints. We see providence now by pieces, but then the whole contexture of it; the secrets of men are then manifested, and upon what principles and ends they have acted, 1 Cor. iv. 5. The truth of the promises and threatenings is then manifested; in the day of God's patience there is a darkness and veil upon the scriptures, we cannot see how they are made good; but in the day of God's recompense we shall, what promises, threatenings, prophecies mean; but chiefly is it a day of manifestation' in regard of the sons of God.' Rom. viii. 19. All is now hidden, Christ is hidden, and the saints are hidden; their life is hidden, Gal. iii. 3; their

glory is hidden, 1 John iii. 2; but then Christ shall appear, and we shall appear with him in glory.' As Moses told the rebels, Num. xvi., To-morrow the Lord will show who are his.' The first-born and only-begotten Son of God then is manifested, Christ will appear in all his royalty and glory, as the great God and Saviour and judge of the world, as the great God; therefore it is said he will appear in the glory of the Father,' Mat. xxiv. 13; xvi. 27. The mystery of his person will now be discovered to the uttermost, and therefore he will appear in such a glory as never creature was capable of, nor can he guess at it. We may by the glory discovered at the giving of the law, when Moses shook for fear, Heb. xii. 19; by the light that shone at his incarnation, Luke ii.; at his transfiguration, Mat. xvii.; by those beams of majesty which broke out from him when the soldiers came to take him, John xviii. 6; by his appearance to Paul--it struck him blind for three days, Acts ix; by Isaiah's terror when he saw God in a vision, Isa. vi. And as he will manifest himself to be the great God, so the true Saviour of the world. The manner of his appearance shall make a full recompense for his abasement. At his first coming, John was his forerunner, as we have said, now an arch angel; then he came with a few fishermen, now with a multitude of angels; then riding on the colt of an ass, now upon the clouds; then as the Son of man, now as the Son of God; then in the form of a servant, now in the glory of the Father; then crowned with thorns, now glory and honour; then to teach righteousness, now to reward righteousness; then in the similitude of sinful flesh.' Rom. viii. 3, now, the second time, without sin,' Heb. ix. 28. At his first coming he was not a sinner, but he came in the garb of a sinner, afflicted, miserable--we judged him as one forsaken of God;' but now he cometh as one discharged of that debt and burden, and as one highly honoured by God the Father. Once more, he cometh in

all things befitting the world's judge, accompanied with angels as his attendants, sitting upon a visible throne that he may be seen of all, heard of all. In earthly judicatories, when great malefactors are to be tried, the whole majesty and glory of a nation is brought forth; the judge in gorgeous apparel, accompanied with the flower of the country, nobles and gentry, and a great conflux of people. So here, Christ cometh forth as the judge, accompanied with angels and saints, powerfully executing the work of that day. And the only-begotten Son of God is manifested; but this is a day of manifestation, not only of the Son,' but of the sons of God,' namely, the saints, who are then set forth in their best robes. In winter the tree appeareth not what it is, the sap and life is hidden in the root, but when summer cometh all is discovered: so now it doth not appear who are God's, nor what they shall be, but at this day all is manifest. When Christ shall appear, we shall appear with him in glory;' they shall attain to that fulness of glory as their hearts could never conceive. It is said, 2 Thes. i. 10, Christ will be admired in them.' The angels shall stand wondering what Christ is about to do with creatures but newly crept out of dust and rottenness. Every one of them shall shine as the sun; and what a great and glorious day must that be, when there is a constellation of so many suns! They shall share with Christ in the glory of his kingdom, as being associated with him in judging the world. The upright shall have dominion over them in the morning,' Ps. xlix. 14; those that are now scorned, persecuted, opposed everywhere, in the morning of the resurrection, when they awake to meet Christ, then shall they have dominion over the carnal world; therefore, sentence beginneth with the godly, as execution doth with the wicked. The elect are first acquitted before the ungodly are condemned, that they may join afterwards with Christ in judging the world, 1 Cor. vi. 2.

Again, it is great in regard of the manner of process, but of that see ver. 15.

3. The consequences of this day; they are three:--(1.) The sending of the persons judged in to their everlasting state; (2.) The resigning up of the kingdom to the Father; (3.) The burning of the world.

[1.] The sending of the persons judged into their everlasting estate, the elect into glory, and the wicked into torments: Mat. xxv. 34, Come, ye blessed of my Father,' &c. You have been too long absent from me; come receive the fruit of your faith and hope; but ver. 41, Go, ye cursed,' &c: they are banished out of Christ's presence with such a terrible ban and proscription as shall never be reversed. As Hainan's face was covered, and so led away to execution, so are they chased out of Christ's presence with horror, yelling and howling with the voice of dragons, and begging for mercy, but find none. Now from this sentence there is no appeal; it is pronounced by Christ as God-man. On earth many times God's sentence is repealed if the nation will repent, &c., Jer. xviii. 8; and so though God doth never change his decree, he doth often change his sentence; but the day of patience is now past, and therefore this sentence can never be recalled. Again, the execution is speedy. Here many times the sentence is passed, but sentence is not speedily executed' upon an evil-doer, Eccles. viii. 11. Once more, this execution beginning with the wicked in the sight of the just, proton ziza'nia: Gather ye first the tares,' &c., Mat. xiii. 30; which worketh the more upon the envy and grief of the wicked, that they are thrust out whilst the godly remain with Christ seeing execution done; and the godly have the deeper sense of their condition, antikei'mena parellagme'na, &c. Contraries put together do more heighten one another; in the execution of the wicked they may see from what they are delivered by grace. Again the sentence is executed upon the whole man,

and that for ever; body and soul are partakers, as in the work, so in the punishment and reward; and it is eternal, for the reward is built on an infinite merit; and the punishment is eternal, because an infinite majesty is offended; and in the next world men are in their final estate, without possibility of change; therefore God is never weary blessing the good and cursing the wicked.

[2.] The next consequent is the resigning and giving up the kingdom to the Father, spoken of 1 Cor. xv. from 24 to 28. Kingdom may be put for royal authority, or subjects governed, as the people we call sometimes the kingdom of England or kingdom of France. Christ is ever head of the earth, and in heaven we subsist not only by virtue of his everlasting merit, but everlasting influence, for he is the life,' John xiv. 6. And therefore I take kingdom here in the latter sense for the subjects or the church, who are resigned or presented to God, Eph. v. 27, as the fruits of Christ's purchase, as a prey snatched out of the teeth of lions. The form of presentation you have, Heb. ii. 13, Behold I and all the little ones which thou hast given me.' Oh! what a great and glorious day will this be, when we shall see Christ and all his little ones following him, and the great Shepherd of the sheep going into his everlasting folds, and all the elect in his company, with their crowns on their heads, singing, O grave! where is thy victory? O death! where is thy sting?' When all enemies shall be broken, and the church lodged in those blessed mansions, what applause and acclamations will there be between them and Christ, between them and the angels, them and their fellow saints! How should we strive to be some of this number!

[3.] The next consequence is the burning of the world, which is set forth at large in 2 Peter iii., per totum. The passages there are literally to be taken, for the fire there spoken of is compared with the waters of Noah,' which was a judgment really executed; and by this

fire, it is probable, the world will not be consumed, but renewed and purged, for it is compared to a melting fire, 2 Peter iii. 10. And the apostle saith elsewhere, The creature shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption.' Rom. viii. 21. And in the everlasting estate God will have all things now, even the world itself. The use of this renewed world is either for a habitation to the just, or that it may remain as a standing monument of God's wisdom and power. (1.) This burning doth not go before the day of judgment, but follow after it; for it seemeth to be an instrument of vengeance on the wicked, 2 Peter iii. 7. I will riot be so bold, with the schoolmen, as to say that the feculent and drossy parts of this fire are reserved for the torment of the wicked in hell for ever; but in the general way we may safely say that it is an instrument of God's vengeance on them. Well, now, that day which hath such an end and close, must needs be a great day. Sodom's fire was dreadful, but nothing to this burning; that was of one particular place, but this of the whole world; that was a preparative warning, but this the last expression of his wrath against the ungodly world. Many give divers witty reasons for this burning; a taste may not be unwelcome. Under the law the vessel that held the sin-offering was to be purged with fire; so the world, where sin hath been committed. The object of our adulteries is burnt and defaced, that we may know the anger of the Lord's jealousy. The old world was destroyed by water, [123] propter ardorem libidinis, because of the heat of lust; and the present world burnt with fire, propter teporem caritatis, because of the coldness of love in the latter days. But of such kind of allusions more than enough.

You see then by all this, that the day of judgment is a great day. Let us now apply it.

If it be a great day, let us regard it more seriously, for all things

should be regarded according to their weight. This is the greatest day that ever we shall see, and therefore we shall be more affected with this day than with anything else. We have slight thoughts of things to come, and therefore they do not work with us. Can we expect such a day, and not spend a thought upon it? O Christians! look for it more, long for it more, provide for it more.

1. Look for it, Phil. iii. 21; Titus ii. 13. Every time you look up to the clouds, remember you have a Saviour that in time will come from thence, and call the world to an account. Faith should always stand ready to meet him, as if he were upon his way; as Rebecca spied Isaac afar off, so doth faith, which is the evidence of things not seen,' Look within the curtain of the heavens, and spy out Christ as preparing for his coming. If he tarrieth longer than we expect, he is not slack,' 2 Peter iii. 9; but we are hasty. He wants no affection to us; his delights were with the sons of men' before they were created, Prov. viii. 31; and certainly, now he is so deeply interested in us, as having bought us with his blood, he desireth to enjoy what he hath purchased. It is not want of love keepeth him away, nor want of truth; God is punctual in his promises, even to a day: Exod. xii. 41, Even the self same day,' &c. If all things were ready he would come presently; therefore wait and look still: they were not deceived that expected his first coming in the flesh. It was said, a virgin shall conceive.' Was it not done? That God would bring his son out of Egypt.' Was it not done? That he should ride to Jerusalem upon the foal of an ass;' and was it not done? Surely the God that hath been faithful all along hitherto will not fail at last.

2. Long for it. The faithful love his appearing,' 2 Tim. iv. 8. This is the great day which they long to see, that they may meet with their beloved, and see him in all his glory and royalty. They have heard much

of Christ, and tasted much of Christ, and they love him much, but yet they have not seen him; they know him by hearsay, and by spiritual experience, but never saw his person: Whom having not seen you love,' &c. They have seen his picture; crucified before their eyes,' Gal. iii. 1;' Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord,' 2 Cor. iii. 18; therefore they cannot be satisfied till this day cometh about. Oh! when shall it once be? The Spirit in the bride saith, Come,' Rev. xxii. 17. Nature saith not Come, but Tarry still. If it might go by voices whether Christ should come, yea or no, carnal men would never give their voice this way. The language of corrupt nature is, Depart,' Job xxi. 14. Carnal men are of the devil's mind: Art thou come to torment us before our time?' Mat. viii.; they cannot endure to hear of it; but Come, O come!' saith grace. This day we have cause to long for, not only upon Christ's account, but our own: it is the day of our perfection as well as Christ's royalty. Now everything tendeth to its perfect state, so doth a Christian; then there is perfect holiness and perfect freedom. We never find Christ a Saviour to the uttermost till then; to the glorified spirits he is but a Saviour in part, some fruit of sin is continued upon the body; but then body and soul are united and perfectly glorified to enjoy God in heaven. Christ then cometh to make an end of what he had begun. He first came to redeem our souls, and then our bodies from corruption; the body is a captive in the grave when the soul is set at liberty; it is held under the power of death till that day. The butler was not afraid to go before Pharaoh, because Joseph told him he should be set at liberty. Lift up your heads,' it is a day of redemption, Luke xxi. 28. Christ cometh to loosen the bands and shackles of death; to think and speak of that day with horror doth ill become him that looketh for such great privileges.

3. Provide for that day. It is called the great and notable day of the

Lord,' Acts ii. 20. It should be the whole employment of our lives to prepare for it; but how shall we provide for that day? I answer--By making peace with God in and by Jesus Christ. When Jacob heard that Esau was coming with a great power and force, he sendeth to make peace with him. We hear of a great day coming, when the Lord shall descend from heaven with a shout, and all his holy angels with him,' (1.) Let us compromise all differences between us and him. We are advised so to do: Luke xiv. 32, While he is yet a great way off, he sendeth an embassage, and desireth conditions of peace.' We need not send to the Lord; God maketh the offer to us: let us lay down the weapons of our defiance, and accept of the terms proposed. (2.) If you would provide for this day, clear up your union with Jesus Christ; he is the judge, and there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ.' Rom. viii. 1. Will the head condemn his own members? If we abide in him,' we shall be able to look him in the face; we shall have boldness in that day,' 1 John ii. 28. Then, though it be a great day, it will not be a terrible day to us. (3.) Frequent communion with him at the throne of grace. When familiar friends meet together after a long absence, what a sweet interview is there! what mutual embraces and endearments pass between them! So acquaint yourselves with Christ aforehand, Job xxii. Common acquaintance with him in external worship will not serve the turn: Luke xiii. 26, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and heard thee in our streets;' and yet Christ saith, I know you not.' There must be a holy intimacy and sweet experience of him; you must know him in the Spirit. (4.) By holy conversation, both as to the matter and end of it; for the great end of this day is that grace may be glorious. Other things are honoured in the world, as power, and strength, and cunning, and civil endowments, but then eminence in grace cometh to be crowned: 2 Peter iii. 11, We that look for such things, what manner of persons

ought we to be in all holiness and godliness of conversation?' There are two words there used, holiness and godliness: the one relateth to the matter of our actions, that we should do things good, and just, and pure; the other, to our end and aim. We must do all this as in and to the Lord, making him the supreme end of all that we do. (5.) We may press you to heavenliness in your choice. Where lieth your treasure? If the enjoyment of the world be your chief est good, that will be of no use to you in that day; in a disdain to our choice, all worldly things are burnt before our eyes; but if your happiness lieth in heaven, thither you are going to take full possession of it. At the last day wicked men cannot murmur; God's judgments are but their own choice. If the goats be placed on the left hand and the sheep on the right, it is but according to their preposterous affections here in the world: Prov. iii. 16, Length of days are in her right hand, and in her left hand riches and honour.' Eternity is the right-hand blessing. Now, if you despise a blessed eternity in comparison of those left-hand blessings, riches and honour, no wonder that your own measure is recompensed into your bosoms. (6.) Love the brethren. This is the great day when all the saints meet together, and how can we expect to meet them with comfort if we should not love them? 1 John iv. 16, 17, That we shall have boldness,' &c. It will be a joyful meeting when those whom we have loved, prayed for, fasted with, and (if necessity did require) relieved, shall then be found in such esteem and honour. (7.) Mercifulness to the poor; see Mat. xxv. 35, 36, with 42 and 43. Christ hath told us aforehand what questions he will ask when he cometh--Have you fed? Have you visited? Have you clothed? &c. It is good that we should be prepared with an answer. (8.) Faithfulness in God's ordinances, and the matters of his house. Our Lord is gone, but he will come again to take an account how matters have been managed during his

absence. The usual period which is fixed to ordinances is the Lord's coming to judgment: 1 Cor. xi. 26, Ye do show forth the Lord's death till he come;' and 1 Tim. vi. 14, Kept his commandment without spot until the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ.' He hath left his ordinances in his church as a pledge of his coming, and to keep the great promise still afoot; therefore above all things they should be kept pure and uncorrupt.

[113] Gregory, Austin, Damascene, &c.

[114] See my notes there.

[115] 2 Tim. ii. 1, My son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.'

[116] Augustine.

[117] Vide Irenaeum, lib. iv. cap. 78; Damas. lib. ii. Orth. Fid., cap. 3; et Neiremb., Theoph., &c.

[118] See my notes on James ii. 19.

[119] See my notes on James i. 25.

[120] Query, horror'?--ED.

[121] Qu. clear'?--ED.

[122] Qu fruit'?--ED.

[123] Ludolphus in Vita Christi.

Ver. 7. Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them, in like

manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

In this verse is the third example, fitly suited to the former: the angels had the blessings of heaven, the Israelites of the church, and Sodom of the world. But the angels upon their apostasy lost heaven; the murmuring Israelites were shut out of Canaan; and the Sodomites were, together with their fruitful soil and pleasant land, destroyed. You see heaven -mercies, and church-mercies, and world-mercies, are all forfeited by the creatures' ingratitude. This last instance is propounded as the first part of a similitude, the reddition of which is in the next verse. In the words observe:--

1. The places or people judged. Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities round about them, in like manner. Those two cities are only mentioned here, as also Gen. xix. 24, because the principal; in Hosea xi. 8, two others are only mentioned, Admah and Zeboim; but Deut. xxix. 23, all four are mentioned, The whole land is brimstone, salt, and burning, like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboim, which the Lord overthrew in his anger and in his wrath.' Now the cities are mentioned rather than the persons, to note the utter destruction of the places, together with the inhabitants; for that clause, the cities about them in like manner, in the original, ton omoion toutois tropon, the word for them is in the masculine gender, whereas cities, the next antecedent, is in the feminine; therefore some refer it to the remote antecedent: the angels and Israelites, as they were punished, so Sodom

and those cities in like manner. So Junius; but I suppose, because cities doth not only imply the places, but the inhabitants, therefore the masculine gender was used by the apostle.

2. Their sin is specified, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh. Here are two great sins charged upon them. (1.) The first is, giving themselves over to fornication, ekporneusasai, the word is unusual, and therefore diversely rendered. One translation, defile themselves with fornication, the Vulgar, exfornicatae, as noting the strangeness and abominableness of their lust; but that is implied in the next expression. Our translation fitly rendereth it by such a phrase as signifieth their excess and vehement addictedness to unclean practices. (2.) The next sin is, going after strange flesh. It is a modest and covert expression, implying their monstrous and unlawful lusts, contrary to the course and institution of nature, a filthiness scarce to be named, from them called Sodomies. The apostle Paul expresseth it thus: Rom. i. 27, Leaving the natural use of the woman, they burned in their lust one toward another, men with men working that which is unseemly.' It is called here strange flesh, sarkos heteras, other flesh,' as being other than what nature hath appointed, or because it is impossible that man and man in that execrable act should make one flesh,' as man and woman do. (3.) Their judgment is set down, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. Sodom, we know, and the cities round about it, were consumed by fire and brimstone rained down from heaven, which, though a dreadful, was but a temporal fire: in what sense doth the apostle call it here eternal fire'? Some, to mollify the seeming austerity of the phrase, read thus, were made an example of eternal fire, suffering vengeance, that is, in that judgment which was executed upon them, God would give the world a type and figure of hell. Others by eternal fire understand the duration

of the effects of the first temporal punishment, the soil thereabout wearing the marks of God's curse to this day. Others, not much differing from the former, by eternal fire understand an utter destruction, and labour to evince it from the use of the phrase in a like sense, and the parallel place in Peter: 2 Peter ii. 6, He turned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, and condemned them with an overthrow,' that is, utterly destroyed them. But why we need to be so tender I know not, the Sodomites being generally represented as men under everlasting judgment, Mat. xi. 24, and the temporal judgment making way for eternal, though as to the state of particular persons we judge not. See Rivet in Gen., Exercit. 97, p. 474.

3. Here is the end and aim of the judgment, are set forth for an example, that is, to be a notable document and instruction to the world to keep them under the law of God; and therefore everywhere in the prophetic threatenings of the word is this instance alluded unto.

The words are explained, but how shall we accommodate them to the apostle's purpose? I answer--Very well; there is a fit correspondency between the case in hand and this example; the Sodomites went after strange flesh, and these apostates after strange opinions. These errors and opinions of theirs tended to sensuality, and so still there is a greater suitableness. The school of Simon, the Nicolaitans, the Gnostics, did defile themselves with monstrous and abominable lust, as the Sodomites did; and therefore he threateneth them with a destruction like to that of Sodom, yea, with eternal fire, figured thereby; especially they having been formerly enlightened with some knowledge of the truth, which the Sodomites were not. Let me now come to the observations.

Obs. 1. Cities and countries suffer for the evil of the inhabitants, as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities round about them were consumed with

fire and brimstone, and turned into a dead lake. Original sin brought on an original curse; Adam's fall a curse upon the whole earth: Gen. iii. 17, Cursed is the ground for thy sake, thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee;' and actual sins do bring on an actual curse: Ps. cvii. 34, He turneth a pleasant land into saltness, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein.' A traitor forfeits not only his life but his goods; so do we not only forfeit our persons, but all our comforts into God's hands; and it is but fit that the earth should be to us, after all our labours, what we are to God after all his husbandry bestowed upon us; we are barren of good fruits as to God, and so justly may the land be to us. I remember the apostle saith, The creature was made subject to vanity,' ouch ekousa, not willingly.' Rom. viii. 20; the creature hath only a natural tendency and inclination, and that carries it to its own good; we had free-will and choice, but abused it, and so brought ourselves and the creature under the bondage and thraldom of corruption; so that the earth, which was in tended to be a monument of God's glory, is now in great part a monument of God's displeasure and our rebellion. It is observable, on the contrary side, that the glorious times of the gospel are expressed by the restoration of the creatures, Isa. xxx. 23-26, and Isa. xi. 6-8. For as the condition of the servant doth depend on the master, so doth the state of the creature upon our conformity or disobedience to God. Well, then, avoid sin, if not in pity to your poor souls, in pity to the poor creatures, to your poor country; as David said, What have these poor sheep done?' So what have the creatures done that you kindle a burning under their glory? See Jer. ii. 15-19, The land is laid waste, and cities burnt without an inhabitant.' What is the cause of all this? Even our sins against the Lord, that a man shall be the ruin of his country and native soil; this should go near to us; shall we turn this

pleasant land into saltness, and lay these dwellings waste, these streets into ashes? Carnal men are usually moved by carnal arguments, and tremble more to hear of the loss of their estates than of their souls; we are startled to hear of scarcity, and famine, and fires, and pestilences; all these are the fruits of sin.

Obs. 2. Those cities were utterly destroyed, and accordingly is the destruction of Sodom put for an utter overthrow. See Isa. xiii. 19, Zeph. ii. 9, Jer. xlviii. 18, Jer. 1. 40, 2 Peter ii. 6. Observe thence, that in judgments wicked men may be brought to an utter destruction. The synagogue of Satan may be utterly destroyed, but not the city of God; in the saddest miseries there is hope of God's children, that their dead stock will bud and scent again: Zech. ix. 12, Prisoners of hope;' the cutting off of root and branch' is the judgment of the wicked, Mal. iv. 1. Their memorial may be blotted out, but Sion's cannot. It is the design of the enemies to extinguish the memory of the church; and many times, to appearance, there is none left, yet out of their ruins and ashes there springeth up a new brood and holy seed to God: they are sorely afflicted,' Ps. cxxix. 1, 2; yet Christ stands his ground; they are not wholly prevailed over; the church may visibly fail, but not totally. Well, then, in the midst of sad miseries, bless God for a remnant; it may be bad, but it is not as Sodom, Isa. i. 9. In times of general defection there will be two or three berries in the top of the uppermost bough,' Isa. xvii. 6. Some that may continue the name of God, and survive the church's troubles, that may yet praise him. Again, do not haunt with the wicked, and suffer your souls to enter into their secret; evil societies may be absolutely destroyed, root and branch. Sodom was condemned with an overthrow.' It is seasonable advice, Come out of her, my people, lest you partake of her plagues,' Rev. xviii. 4. Babylon, that was a nest

for unclean sinners, will be made a cage for unclean birds.'

Obs. 3. From that, and the cities about them in like manner, observe, likeness in sin will involve us in the same punishment; they perished, and the other cities in like manner:' none had safety but Lot, who consented not, but grieved for these impurities, 2 Peter ii. 8. God's wrath maketh no distinction. Quos una impietas profanavit, una sententia dejicit, saith Ambrose; they were found in the same sin, and therefore surprised by the same judgment:; The destruction of the transgressors and sinners shall be together,' Isa. i. 28; that is, the one as well as the other, by what names or titles soever distinguished. Why? I answer--Fellowship in evil can neither excuse sin nor keep off wrath. It cannot excuse sin; nothing more usual than for men to say, they do as others do; if you do as others do, you shall suffer as others do: example doth not lessen sin, but increase it, partly because their own act is an approbation of the act of others; imitation is a post constat, and so, besides your own guilt, you are guilty of their sins that sinned before; partly because it is hard to sin against example, but we sin against conscience, we allowing that in ourselves which we formerly condemned in another; partly because it is a sin against warning; to stumble at the stone at which we see others stumble is an error and without excuse. Say not, then, it is the fashion and guise, how can we do otherwise? [124] Be not conformed to the fashions of this world; you should be like Lot, chaste in Sodom, or like those Christians that were godly in Nero's court. Again, it doth not keep off wrath; multitudes and single persons are all one to avenging justice; the devouring burning of God's wrath can break through briars and thorns. It is said, Prov. xi. 21, Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished.' Confederations and societies in evil are as nothing to the power of God, though sometimes the sons of Zeruiah,

powerful oppressors, with their combined interests, may be too hard for men. Well, then, learn to live by rule and not by example, and propose the sins of others to your grief, not imitation: Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but reprove them rather,' Eph. v.; their practice will never afford you excuse nor exemption. Your duty is to be good in a wicked age, fresh, like fish in the salt water. Follow not a multitude to do evil,' wickedness is never the less odious because it is more common; it is not safe always to keep the road; the bad way is known by the breadth of it, and the much company in it, Mat. vii. 13. To walk with God is praiseworthy, though none do it besides thyself; and to walk with men in the way of sin is dangerous, though millions do it besides thee.

Obs. 4. Again, from that, and the cities about them in like manner. The lesser cities imitated the greater; Admah and Zeboim followed the example of Sodom and Gomorrah. An error in the first concoction is seldom mended in the second; if sin pass the heads and chiefs of the people, it is taken up by others under their command. When the first sheet is done off, others are printed by the same stamps. Magistrates are public fountains of good or evil to the people over whom they are set. If they be cold and careless in the worship of God, given to contempt of the ministry, enemies to reformation, it will be generally taken up as a fashion by others. When the head is sick, the whole heart is faint,' Isa. i. 5. Diodorus Siculus telleth us of a people in Ethiopia, that if their kings halted, they would maim themselves that they might halt likewise; if they wanted an eye, in a foolish imitation they would make themselves blind, that they might comply even with the defects and diseases of their princes. The vices of them in place and power are authorised by their example and pass for virtues; if they be slight in the use of ordinances, it will be taken up as a piece of

religion by inferiors to be so too.

Obs. 5. From the first crime here specified, giving themselves over to fornication, that adulterous uncleanness doth much displease God. When they were given over to fornication they were given over to judgment. (1.) This is a sin that doth not only defile the soul but the body: 1 Cor. vi. 18, Every sin that a man doth is without the body, but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.' Most other sins imply an injury done to others, to God or our neighbour. This more directly an injury to ourselves, to our own bodies. It is a wrong to the body, considered either as our vessel,' 1 Thes. iv. 4, or as the temple of the Holy Ghost,' 1 Cor. vi. 19. If you consider it as our vessel or instrument for natural uses, you wrong it by uncleanness--namely, as it destroyeth the health of the body, quencheth the vigour of it, and blasteth the beauty, and so it is self-murder. If you consider it as the temple of the Holy Ghost, it is a dishonour to the body to make it a channel for lust to pass through. Shall we make a sty of a temple? abuse that to so vile a purpose which the Holy Ghost hath chosen to dwell in, to plant it into Christ as a part of his mystical body, to use it as an instrument in God's service, and finally to raise it out of the grave, and conform it to Christ's glorious body? The dignity of the body well considered is a great preservative against lust. (2.) It brawneth the soul; the softness of all sensual pleasures hardeneth the heart, but this sin, being the consummate act of sensuality, much more: Hosea iv. 11, Whoredom and wine take away the heart.' These two are mentioned because usually they go together, and both take away the heart, besot the conscience, take away the tenderness of the affections. So that men are not ashamed of sin, insensible of danger, and unfit for duty, and so grow sapless, careless, senseless. (3.) Next to the body and soul there is the name,

now it blotteth the name: Prov. vi. 33, A wound and a dishonour shall he get, and a reproach that shall not be wiped off.' Sensual wickedness is most disgraceful, as having turpitude in it, and being sooner discerned than spiritual. (4.) It blasteth the estate: Heb. xiii. 4, Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge;' he will judge others, but surely these, and that remarkably in this life. (5.) This doth exceedingly pervert the order of human societies; Solomon maketh it worse than theft, Prov. vi. 29-32. A thief stealeth out of necessity, but here is no cogent necessity; the loss here is not reparable, as that which is made by theft. It bringeth in great confusion, in families, &c., therefore adultery under the law was punished by death, which theft was not. (6.) It is a sin usually accompanied with impenitency--namely, as it weareth out remorse, and every spark of good conscience. Bead those cutting places: Prov. xxii. 14, The mouth of a strange woman is a deep pit, and he that is abhorred of the Lord shall fall therein;' so Prov. ii. 19, None that go unto her return again; nor do they take hold of the ways of life.' So see Eccles. vii. 26-28. It is a sin into which God useth to give over reprobates. Solomon saith he knew but one returning. Well, then, be not drunk with the wine of Sodom, and do not squeeze out the clusters of Gomorrah. Whoredom is a deep ditch or gulf, wherein those that are abhorred of the Lord are suffered to fall. Beware of all tendings that way; do not soak and steep the soul in pleasures; take heed of effeminacy, ma'lakoi: The soft or effeminate shall not enter into the kingdom of God,' 1 Cor. vi. 9. Beware of lustful glances, Mat. v. 28, of rolling the fancy upon undone [125] objects; heart defilement maketh way for corporal; lust beginneth in wanton eyes many times, and it is fed by a delicacy and unworthy softness. Guard the senses, cut off' the provisions of the flesh, avoid occasions, be employed. Again, if you have stumbled into

this deep ditch, repent the more speedily, the more seriously; the case is sad, but not altogether desperate. We read of a possibility for publicans and harlots entering into the kingdom of God. Bewail your estate as David doth, Ps. li. His adultery left a stain upon him: Except in the matter of Uriah,' &c. Job saith, It is a fire that consumeth to destruction, and will root out all your increase,' Job xxxi. 12; therefore quench it the sooner, &c.

Obs. 6. Again, from the other sin, and going after strange flesh, observe, sin is never at a stay; first, uncleanness, and then given over to uncleanness, and then strange flesh. When a stone runneth down hill it stayeth not till it cometh to the bottom; a filthy sinner is growing more filthy still, until he hath outgrown the heart of a man, as the Sodomites did, men with men working that which is unseemly,' a sin which none but a devil in the likeness of a man would commit, a sin that hath filthiness enough in it to defile the tongue that speaketh of it. Well, then, here is a glass wherein to see the wickedness of our natures. Who would think reason should invent so horrid an act? Rom. i. 27. They had no more original corruption than thou and I have. If God remove the bridle, whither shall we run? Let wicked men consider hence how foolishly they promise themselves immunity from drunkenness, adultery, or any gross wickedness. Caution any of them against those things. No, I warrant you, say they; do you think I am such a wretch? Is thy servant a dog?' 2 Kings viii. 13.

Obs. 7. From that, the vengeance of eternal fire. The wicked Sodomites were not only burnt up by that temporal judgment, but cast into hell, which is here called eternal fire.' Hell is set forth by two notions: A worm that never dieth, and a fire that never goeth out,' Mark ix. 44. In both which expressions there is an allusion to the worms that breed in dead bodies, and the fire wherewith they were wont to burn their

dead in former times; and the one implieth the worm of conscience, the other the fire of God's wrath.

1. The worm is bred in the body itself, and therefore fitly representeth the gnawings of conscience. The worm of conscience consisteth in three things, There is memoria praeteritorum, sensus praesentium, et metus futurorum. First, Conscience worketh on what is past, the remembrance of their former enjoyments and past pleasures: Luke xvi. 25, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime,' &c. So of time wasted, opportunities of grace slighted, the folly of their own choice, &c., all which are sad reflections to them. Secondly, There is a sense of the present pain. Here when they were corrected they were senseless, like stocks and stones; but then, there being nothing to mitigate their grief or beguile the sense of it, no carnal pleasures wherein to steep conscience, there must needs be sense and feeling, joined with a bitter discontent at their condition. Thirdly, For the future their condition is hopeless; despair is one ingredient into their torment: Heb. x. 27, There remaineth nothing but a fearful looking for the fiery indignation of the Lord.' Thus for the worm.

2. The next notion is that of the text, fire, or the wrath of God transacted upon them. In the sufferings of the damned God hath an immediate hand, Heb. x. 31; no creature is strong enough to convey all his wrath. In bearing this wrath, the capacity of the creature is enlarged to the uttermost; and in their punishment God sets himself a-work to show the glory of his strength.' Rom. ix. 22. He upholdeth the creature with one hand, and punisheth it with the other; if his anger be but kindled a little,' and a spark of it fly into the conscience, the poor creature is at his wits' end: but how dreadful will their portion be against whom he stirreth Up all his wrath?' Ps. lxxviii. 38. The human nature of the Lord Christ in a just abhorrency

recoiled when he was to taste of this cup. We, that cannot endure the gripes of the cholic, the torment of the stone, the pain of the rack, how shall we dwell with devouring burnings?' and all this is for ever. As our obligations to God are infinite, and as we turn back upon eternal happiness offered in the gospel, and as the majesty offended by sin is infinite, so that we cannot restore the honour to God which we have taken away, therefore by just reason is our punishment eternal. In the other world men are in their final estate; the fuel continueth for ever, the creature is not abolished, and the fire continueth for ever, the breath of the living Lord still keepeth the flame burning. We think a prayer long, a sermon long; what will hell be? In the night, if we cannot sleep, we count the hours, and every minute seems tedious. Oh! what will they do that are tormented night and day for ever and ever'? Rev. xx. 10. Now this is the portion of all that forget God. Oh! who would run this hazard for a little temporal satisfaction? The scourges of conscience that we meet with here are too great price for the short pleasures of a brutish lust, much more the worm that never dieth, the fire that shall never be quenched.'

Obs. 8. There is one note more, and that is from that clause, are set forth for an example. Observe thence, that Sodom's destruction is the world's great example. Both Peter and Jude show that this was the end of God's judgments upon Sodom, that they might be an example to all that live ungodly.'

You will say, What have we to do with Sodom? their sins being so unnatural, their judgments so unusual. (1.) As to their sins, I inquire, Are there none of Sodom's sins amongst us? If not going after strange flesh,' yet fornication;' if not fornication, yet pride and idleness, and fulness of bread?' I say again, though our sins be not so great in themselves, yet by necessary circumstance and aggravation,

they may be greater; as impenitency, unbelief, abuse and neglect of the gospel, despising the offers of grace. The grossest sins against the law are not so great as sins against the gospel: Mat. xi. 24, It shall be more tolerable for Sodom,' &c. We sin against more light, more love, &c. (2.) As to the judgments, though God doth not now-a-days smite a country with judgments immediately from heaven, or make it utterly unuseful, as he did Sodom, yet his displeasure is no less against sin; and if not the same, a like judgment, one very grievous, may come upon us.

This being premised, let us come to open this example, in which these three things are considerable:--(1.) The state of Sodom; (2.) The sins of Sodom; (3.) The judgment. The first will show you God's mercy; the second, their guilt; the third, God's justice. Usually these three follow one another; great mercies make way for great sins, and great sins for great judgments.

1. I begin with the state of Sodom. There--(1.) The quality of the place. There were sundry goodly cities, of which Sodom was the principal, fairly situated in the plain of Jordan, full of people, and well supplied with corn, wine, oil, and all earthly contentments. It is said, Gen. xiii. 10, Sodom was pleasant, and as the garden of the Lord.' And yet afterwards this was the place which was the scene of so much wrath and utter desolation. What may the world learn from hence? That we must give an account for common mercies. God reckoned with the servant that had but one talent, Mat. xxv. The world is a place of trial, all men have a trust committed to them. The talents of the heathens were fruitful seasons, food and gladness,' Acts xiv. 17. God, that never left himself ama'rturon, without a witness,' hath left us anapologe'tous, without excuse:' a plentiful soil doth not argue a good people, but a good God. Sodom was pleasantly and richly situated. If we

bad nothing else to answer for but an island of blessings, how poorly have we discharged this trust? (2.) Take notice of their late deliverance. Four kings made war upon them, by whom they were carried captive, and rescued by Abraham, Gen. xiv. 15, 16. Deliverances from war and. captivity leave a great engagement. When God hath once spared us, if we repent not, the next turn is utter destruction. Deliverances, if not improved, are but reprievals; we are not so much preserved, as reserved to a greater misery; hoisted up that our fall may be the more dreadful, snatched out of one misery that we may be cast into a worse. Oh! what have we to answer for our late deliverances! Sodom was but once saved in war, we many times. It is to be feared that passage recordeth our doom, Ps. cvi. 43, Many times did he deliver them, but they provoked him by their counsel, and were brought low for their iniquity.' Deliverances not improved are pledges of certain ruin. (3.) God's patience in bearing with them. Sodom for a long time slept quietly in its sins unmolested, undisturbed. The sins of Sodom cry to me.' [126] The Lord proffered Abraham, if there were but ten righteous persons found there, he would spare the cities. In four cities not ten righteous persons! God is silent as long as their sins would let him be quiet; but then, when he could no longer bear, he goeth down to take vengeance. How long doth the Lord protract the ruin of these wicked cities? Justice is his strange work,' but it is his work; mercy does much with God, but not all; justice must be heard, especially when it pleadeth on behalf of abused mercy. God, that would spare the sinner, yet hateth the sin. When a people do nothing but weary justice and abuse mercy, the Lord will rain from the Lord,' &c., [127] Gen. xix. 24. Christ will interpose for such a people's destruction; heaven will rain down hell upon a people so obstinately wicked. The Lord is gracious, but not senseless. As he will not always contend, so not

always forbear. (4.) Lot's admonition; it seemeth he frequently reproved them, and therefore do they scorn him: Gen. xix. 9, This one fellow came to sojourn amongst us, and he will needs be a judge.' His soul was not only vexed with those lewd courses, but, as occasion was offered, he sought to dissuade them. Thence learn that God seldom punisheth without warning: the old world had Noah's ministry, and Sodom Lot's admonitions. The Lord may say to every punished people, as Reuben to his brethren, Did not I warn you, and you would not hear?' Gen. xlii. 22. Seldom doth he hew a people with the sword but first he heweth them by prophets: means of conviction aggravate both the sin and the judgment. Ah! we have a clearer light, and therefore must expect a heavier doom, Mat. x. 15. Sins are aggravated not only by the foulness of the act. but the degrees of light against which they are committed. Sodom sinned sorely as to the act, but they could not sin against so much light as we do; therefore it shall be easier for them at the day of judgment. (5.) They had the benefit of magistracy; those were cities that were brought into government. We read of the king of Sodom,' Gen. xiv. 2; but it seems he did not interpose his authority, but rather connive at and tolerate the wickedness of this people, yea, rather approve and partake with them in their abominations. Consider, when the vices of inferiors are dissembled and winked at by governors, the Lord himself taketh the matter in hand; and then look for nothing but speedy ruin. The guilt of a nation is much increased when sin is tolerated, yea, favoured and countenanced; especially when righteousness is rather restrained and curbed than sin, as the affronts done to Lot witnessed; the end why magistracy was ordained is then perverted, 1 Tim. ii. 2, Rom. xiii. 5, namely, for the punishment of evil-doers,' and that goodness be encouraged: they were punished for allowing the filthiness of strange flesh. What will become of us if magistrates should be

careless and wink at, yea, countenance, strange opinions, as horrid and as much against the light of Christianity as that was against the light of nature.

2. Let us look upon the sins of Sodom. See Ezek. xvi. 49, Lo! this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness; neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy;' to which add the sins of the text, and then this black roll is complete. I shall consider--(1.) The sins; (2.) The aggravations.

[1.] The sins. (1.) Pride. It is hard to enjoy plenty and not to grow haughty. Prosperous winds soon fill the sails, but, blowing too strongly, overturn the vessel; how few are able to carry a full cup without spilling? to manage plenty without pride? Men grow rich and then high-minded, and that is the next way to ruin. (2.) Idleness; an easy, careless life maketh way for danger. God sent all into the world for action; standing pools putrify, and things not used contract rust; so do idle persons settle into vile and degenerate lusts. (3.) Fulness of bread; that is, corporal delights: Luke xvii. 28, They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they build ed;' their whole lives were but a diversion from one pleasure to another. How soon are earthly comforts abused into luxury and excess! Fulness of estate maketh way for fulness of bread, and many beastly sins. (4.) Unmercifulness. You never knew any prodigal but they were' also uncharitable, as Sodom here, and the epicure, Luke xvi.; and you shall see James v. 4, 5, those that nourished their hearts as in a day of slaughter,' oppressed the labourers. They that set their hearts for ease and pleasure, know not the bitterness of grief, and therefore do not compassionate it in others, Amos vi. 6. (5.) Uncleanness and fornication. This followeth on the former; fulness of bread must be emptied and unladed in lust. (6.) That beastly wickedness implied in the text. When the angels came to

destroy them, because they were of a comely visage, they came raging at the doors, Gen. xix., as usually wickedness is increased to the height when God cometh to punish it. Well, then, if we put all these together, they were a lazy, easy, secure, oppressing, filthy, and unclean people. We may wonder more at God's patience, that he bore with them so long, than at his justice, that he punished them so sorely.

[2.] The aggravations. (1.) Shamelessness: Isa. iii. 9, They declare their sin as Sodom, they publish it as Gomorrah;' when a people are past shame they are past hope; such do dare God to punish them. (2.) Contempt of reproof, a sure forerunner of ruin, when the reprover of sin is blamed more than the actor. Lot seemed as one that mocked,' Gen. xix. 14. When God's messengers are contemned, he can hold no longer.

[3.] Their judgment. The Lord rained from the Lord fire and brim stone upon them.' Observe here--(1.) The suddenness; the sun shone in the morning as at other times, Gen. xix. 23; they had not the least fear of any such mischief at hand. God usually surpriseth a people in their security; after a great calm cometh a storm: Perish in the midway,' Ps. ii. 11, in their full career, when they dream of no such matter. (2.) The equity: the sin was like the punishment. They first burned with lusts, and then with fire; they burned with vile un natural lusts, and therefore, against the ordinary course of nature, fire falleth down from heaven. In this fire there was a stink for their filthiness. [128] Thus doth God retaliate. Nadab and Abihu offered strange fire, and they were consumed with strange fire coming down from heaven. Job, professing his innocency in case of adultery, saith, Otherwise let my wife grind to another, and a stranger bow down upon her,' Job xxxi. 10, implying that God would punish him in his own bed, if he had violated another's. In the Gospel we read, Luke xvi., that he was denied a drop that would not give a crumb, &c. (3.) Observe the power of God. God a

little before had drowned the world with water, now he consumeth Sodom by fire; all the elements are at his beck, the creatures are his hosts, Job xxxvii. 6. If God say, Be thou upon the earth,' they presently obey. If we find sins, God will find punishments; he can execute judgments by contrary means, now drown and then burn. (4.) The severity of God; he raineth down fire and brimstone, which is a map and type of hell, Isa. xxx. 33; Rev. xxi. 15. The calamities that light upon the godly are a token of heaven,' Phil. i. 28; namely, as they work to purify us from sin; but those on the wicked are types of hell, preambles to future woes, as darkness on the Egyptians was a figure of utter darkness. So these were first turned to destruction, and then into hell. It is sad to think of the judgment past; worse of judgment to come.

Thus God delighteth to make those that have been examples to others in sinning, examples to them in punishment.

[124] Non ego sum ambitiosus, sed nemo aliter Romae vivere potest,' &c.

[125] Qu. unclean'?--ED.

[126] Misericordia mea suadet ut parcam, peccatorum clamor cogit ut puniam.'--Salvianus.

[127] Domiuus Christus a Domino Patre.'--Council. Syrm.

[128] Sulphur foetorem habet, ignis ardorem.'

Ver. 8. Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise

dominion, and speak evil of dignities.

In this verse you have the apodosis of the former instance: likewise is the adverb that implieth the connection between the two terms of a comparison; they perished that went after strange flesh, so these filthy dreamers that defile the flesh, &c., shall perish. In the words you may observe--(1.) A description of their persons, filthy dreamers. (2.) A discovery of their sins; two are mentioned in this verse. (1st.) Akatharsi'a, their impurity, they defile the flesh. (2d.) Ataxi'a, their tumultuous carriage towards superiors, expressed in two phrases: First, They despise dominion; secondly, They speak evil of dignities. What these two phrases import is some question. Some think the first noteth their judgment and affection, the second, their speech and practice. Some think two kinds of government are here understood, and refer despising of dominion to contempt of magistracy and public government, and speaking evil of dignities to the private government of masters, 1 Tim. vi. 12, which was also despised by these wretches under the pretence of Christian liberty. Others more properly understand the first clause of civil government, usually expressed in scripture by ku'riotes, or domination; and speaking evil of dignities is fitly referred to the traducing and opposing of government and governors ecclesiastical, as apostles, pastors, teachers, and elders. The officers of the church are called do'xa, the glory of Christ,' 2 Cor. viii. 23, and what we translate speak evil of dignities, is in the original speak evil of glories; but of this more anon.

Let me open the words: Likewise. In the original there are many words, omoios mentoi kai houtoi, likewise, notwithstanding; that is, though

there be so many and such apparent instances of God's judgment, and those set before us for an example, yet they, being blinded with their wicked passions, are not afraid, but boldly cast themselves upon the hazard of the same ruin. Filthy dreamers; the word in the original is enupniazomenoi, led, inspired, or acted by dreams, or deluded by dreams. Beza rendereth it sopiti, being lulled asleep, as noting their security. I suppose rather the dotage of error, by which they were as it were bewitched and enchanted. Our translation seemeth to carry it another Way, as applying it to nocturnal pollutions, because dreaming is joined with defiling the flesh. And Peter chargeth these persons with rolling their fancies upon unclean objects, 1 Peter ii. 14; or, possibly, it may be taken literally, the persons here noted pretending to dreams inspired by associate and assistant spirits, see Euseb., lib. iv. cap. 7. The next phrase is defile the flesh; that is, pollute themselves with libidinous practices: 2 Peter ii. 10, They walked after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness,' and that under a pretence of the gospel, vide Irenaeum passim de Haer. Valentin. The Nicolaitans taught community of wives, and that it was an indifferent thing to commit adultery, Rev. ii. 6, 14. The Gnostics gave themselves up to all manner of prodigious and incestuous pollutions; whence, from their obscenity and beastly life, they were called Borborites. See again Euseb. Epihan. Haer. 26, lib. iv. cap. 7. How many ways they did defile the flesh we cannot with modesty express. The heathens, who made no distinction, charged these impurities upon the Christians in the general, as if they used the unlawful company of their mothers and sisters, &c. The next phrase is despise dominion, athetountes. The word athetein signifieth to remove a thing out of its place with some scorn and indignation; and so it implieth their utter enmity to civil policy and government: 2 Peter ii. 10, They despise government, presumptuous are they, and

self-willed,' Kurio'teta, dominion. Some apply this to the dominion of Christ, which by their fables of the Æones or lords rulers they did set at nought; but of that in the 4th verse. But now he speaks of the government of men, and there is an emphasis in the word kurio'teta, dominion, which is more than if he had said kuri'ous, rulers; for they did not only despise their magistrates, or men invested with superiority, but magistracy itself, as a thing unfitting for believers, and such as were made free by Christ, to endure. The last part of the charge is they speak evil of dignities, or, as it is in the original, blaspheme glories; by which some understand angels, as Clemens Alexandrinus; these impure heretics devising things unworthy and misbeseeming the angels; rather, I suppose, it implieth their scorns, curses, and reproaches cast upon the officers of the church, who are the glory of Christ, and the practice is afterward compared with the rebellion of Korah, who rose up, not only against Moses, but Aaron, Num. xi. In the whole you have a lively description of our modern ranters, levellers, familists, quakers, who, by dreams, are led on to defile the flesh, and to despise all authority, both in church and commonwealth, and that with bitter curses and evil speakings, so that our days afford us but too clear a comment on the expressions of this scripture; it is sadly fulfilled before our eyes. I come to the observations.

Obs. 1. From that filthy dreamers; note, that the erroneous thoughts of wicked men are but a dream. It is but friar-like to follow an illusion too far; only a little for illustration. Wicked men are dreamers--(1.) In regard of their state and condition, every carnal man is in a state of a deep sleep,' Isa. xxix. 10; snorting upon the bed of ease, without any sense of the danger of their condition, as Jonah in the ship was found asleep when the storm arose. They sleep, but their damnation

sleepeth not,' 2 Peter ii. 3. (2.) In regard of the suitableness between their vain thoughts and a dream. A dream, you know, tickleth with a false delight, and deceiveth with a vain hope.

1. Tickleth with a false delight: they hug a cloud, as we say, instead of Juno, and embrace the contentments and pleasures of the world in stead of the true riches; a carnal man's running from pleasure to pleasure is but a sweet dream, a fit of mirth and pleasure while conscience is asleep: They walk in a vain show,' Ps. xxxix. 6; they imagine a great deal of felicity and contentment in their condition; but when they come to warm themselves by their own sparks, they lie down in sorrow,' Isa. l. 11.

2. Deceiveth with a vain hope, as where the prophet compareth the dream of the enemies of the church to the dream of a night vision, Isa. xxix. 7, 8, And it shall be as an hungry man dreameth, and be hold he eateth, but he awaketh and his soul is empty; or when as a thirsty man dreameth, and behold he drinketh, but he awaketh, and behold he is faint, and his soul hath appetite.' So it is with them, all their hopes are dashed in an instant. The foolish virgins slept, Mat. xxv., and when they slept they dreamed that the door of grace would still be open to them, but they found it shut. Many flatter themselves with fair hopes till they awake in flames, but then all is gone.

Take heed, then, of being deceived by your own dreams, and the fictions of your own brain; there are no dreams so foolish as those we dream waking, as Epiphanus saith of the Gnostics; it was not enupni'asis tou u'pnou, a sleeping dream that they were guilty of, but lerologi'a psu'ches os di' u'pnou legome'nes, the dotage of their minds, putting them upon fancies as monstrous and incoherent as men's thoughts in a dream. Waking dreams are most pernicious. There are two sorts of these dreams--(1.) Dreams in point of opinion, when we hug error instead of

truth. (2.) Dreams in point of hope, when we cherish presumption instead of faith.

1. Dreams in opinion, which are very rife now; the old world is apt to dote. [129] Idle and ungrounded notions, how plausible soever, are but the dreams of a misty sleepy brain. To prevent these take these rules--(1.) If you would beware of dreams, beware of a blind mind. Men sleep in the dark, and in sleep fancy gets the start of reason; indistinct thoughts do easily dispose to error, and a half light will certainly abuse you: The simple believeth every word,' Prov. xiv. 15. (2.) Suffer not yourselves to be blinded, First, Not by vile affections: men would fain have that true which is pleasing, and most accommodate to their own interests. Vile affection taketh away the light of reason, and leaveth us only the pride of reason; and therefore none so confident and touchy in their opinions as they that are misled by lusts and interests. How easily do we exasperate our minds, and invent prejudices against a hated truth! If the weights be equal, yet if the balances be not equal, wrong will be done. When the heart is biassed before the search, and swayed with some carnal desire or interest, the judgment is obscured and cannot consider of the weight of what is alleged; there is an idol in the heart. Secondly, By vulgar prejudice. That the devil may keep the world asleep, it is his usual trick to burden the ways of God with clamour and vulgar prejudice. A dream or lie dareth not combat with truth in open field, and therefore fortifieth against it with popular arguments, that the ways of God may be suspected rather than tried; and usually it falleth that error is more specious at the first blush, God's providence suffering his own ways to be under the cross and the world's displeasure. Now, in such a case, men keep at a distance, and are loath to search lest they meet with trouble of conscience for not obeying the truth, or trouble from

the world for crossing their customs and fashions. Thirdly, By personal administration in spiritual things; we learn to dream from one another, Deut. xiii. 3, Zech. x. 2. No man must be set up in God's chair, and their dictates followed as if they were infallible.

Study the word, else there is no light in what is brought to you, Isa. viii. 20; it is but only a dream and dotage of men's brains, and the closer you keep to the letter of the word the better. Many are perverted by mystical interpretations, when men bring that to the word which they do do not find there; the letter must not be receded from as long as it is capable of any commodious interpretation. Now this word must be hidden in the heart,' Ps. cxix. 9, and dwell in us richly,' Col. iii. 16.

2. There are dreams in point of hope; and so--(1.) Some wholly mistake in the object, and dream of an eternal happiness in temporal enjoyments, Ps. xlix. 11; so Luke xii. 19, Rev. xviii. 9. (2.) Others dream of attaining the end without using the means; they live in sin, and yet hope to die comfortably, and go to heaven at length for all that, as if it were but an easy and sudden leap from Delilah's lap to Abraham's bosom; and the pleasures of sin for a season' would be no hindrance to the enjoyment of the pleasures at God's right hand for ever more;' a vain dream, see Luke xvi. 25, and James v. 5. (3.) Others mistake about the means, because they have a cold form; they are apt to be conceited of their spiritual condition and estate, Rev. iii. 17. If you would not dream in this kind, examine your hearts often; examination is like a rubbing of the eyes after sleep, and reviving of conscience the recollection of our dreams; a man laugheth at his dreams when he is awake, and when fancy is cited before the tribunal of God, vain apprehensions fly away. Again, be sober and watchful,' 1 Peter v. 9, 2 Thes. v. 6. Confessing sin it is telling our dream when we are

awake and come to ourselves.

Obs. 2. From that defile the flesh, observe that dreams of error dispose to practices of sin and uncleanness, and impurity of religion is usually joined with uncleanness of body, which cometh to pass partly by the just judgment of God, who punisheth spiritual fornication with bodily: Hosea iv. 12, 13, They have gone a-whoring from their God, therefore their daughters shall commit whoredom, and their spouses adultery.' That is God's course, that the odiousness of the one may make them see the heinousness of the other; see Rom. i. 24. Partly by the influence of error; [130] it perverteth the heart; a frame of truth preserveth the awe of God in the soul, and a right belief maketh the manners orthodox: all sins are rooted in wrong thoughts of God, 3 John 11, either in unbelief or misbelief: unbelief is the mother of sin, and misbelief the nurse of it; it springeth from distrust, and is countenanced by error. Partly because the design of most errors is to put the soul into a liberty which God never allowed. Some errors come from the pride of reason, because it will not veil and strike sail to faith; but most come from vile affection;' a carnal heart must be gratified with a carnal doctrine: 2 Peter ii. 19, They promise liberty,' &c. Errors are but a device to cast off Christ's yoke, and to lull the conscience asleep in a course of disobedience. Well, then, avoid error of judgment if you would avoid filthiness of conversation; men first dream, and then defile the flesh; abominable impurities (unless temper of nature and posture of interests hinder) are the usual fruit of evil opinions. Truth is the root of holiness: Sanctify them by thy truth; thy word is truth,' John xvii. 17. God's blessing goeth with his own doctrine, 1 Peter i. 22. Again, those that have taken up the profession of a right way of religion should beware of staining it by such kind of practices. Nothing maketh the ways of God suspected so

much as the scandals of those that profess to walk in them: Walk in the light as children of the light,' Eph. v., otherwise you will be a reproach to the truth, and deprive it of its testimony.

Obs. 3. Again, observe that sin is a defilement; it staineth and darkeneth the glory of a man, Mat. xv. 20. This defilement was implied in the washings of the ceremonial law, and in baptism; we are washed as soon as we are born, because we are sinners as soon as we are born. Surely they that glory in sin do but glory in their own shame; it is but as if a man should boast of his own dung, and count his spittle an ornament; when you count graceless swearing, mightiness to drink, revenge, pride, a glory to you, you do the same: there is nothing maketh us stink in God's nostrils but sin: Ps. xiv. 3, They are altogether become filthy;' so much sin as you have about you, so much nastiness. Gain is pleasant to those that are taken with that kind of lust, but the scripture calleth it filthy lucre,' 1 Tim. iii. 3; all sins are compared to filthy garments,' Zech. iii. 4, Jude 19, and Isa. xxx. 22. Desire to be washed, and that thoroughly, Ps. li. 2.

Obs. 4. Again observe, that of all sins, the sin of uncleanness or unlawful copulation is most defiling. It defileth the whole man, but chiefly the body; and therefore it is said they defile the flesh. It staineth the soul with filthy thoughts, Mat. xv. 20; it staineth the name, Prov. vi. 33; but in a singular manner it polluteth the body, 1 Cor. vi. 18. In all other outward sins, though the body be the instrument, yet it is not the object of them. All other sins do abuse objectum extra positum (as Piscator explaineth it), as a drunkard, wine; an epicure, meats; a worldling, riches. All these are objects without us; but here the body is not only the instrument, but the object: Rom. i. 24, God gave them up to uncleanness to dishonour their own bodies.' So see 1 Thes. iv. 4. It wasteth the strength and beauty

of the body, Prov. v. 9-11, hindereth our serviceableness, and doth not consider that this body is consecrated to God, Rom. xii. 1, and 1 Cor. vi. 15; a temple of the Holy Ghost,' 1 Cor. vi. 19; interested in hopes of glory, Phil. iii. 21; and therefore puts it to so vile a use as to be an instrument of lust. Christians, shall those eyes which are consecrated to God, to behold his works, be windows to let in sin? 2 Peter ii. 14; that body which is the Holy Ghost's temple, be made the member of a harlot,' and so wasted in the service of lust as to become a clog to us, and wholly useless as to any gracious purposes? Are not your beauty, health, strength, concernments too good to be spent upon so vile an interest? Take heed, then, of all uncleanness, both conjugal, consisting in excess and immoderation of lust in. the married estate, si vinum ex apothecâ tuâ, &c., you may not be drunk with your own wine, nor quench the vigour of nature by excess in those pleasures which the laws of God and men do allow you; and also of uncleanness adulterous, which is more brutish, when men scat ter their lusts promiscuously, without confinement to one object.

06s. 5. From that despise dominion. Observe that errors, especially such as tend to sensuality, make men unruly and anti-magistratical. Dreamers that do defile themselves,' do also despise dominion.' Now this cometh to pass, partly from the permission of God's wise and just providence, who suffereth such miscarriages to awaken the magistrate to a care of truth, if not in zeal for God's glory, yet out of a sense of his own interest, and upon reason of state, the commonwealth being troubled by those who first began to trouble the church, oi peri` ta theia xeni'zontes pollou`s anapei'thousin allotrionomein; new doctrines put men after an itch upon new laws, and false religions are usually turbulent; partly because persons loose and erroneous would free themselves from all awe, both of God and man, as it is said of the

unjust judge, that he feared neither God nor man,' Luke xviii. So with those men. Error taketh off the dread of God, and sedition the dread of the magistrate, that so they may more freely defile the flesh. God hath two deputies to keep a sinner under awe--conscience and the magistrate. Now false doctrine benumbeth conscience, and then that all authority may be laid aside, the rights of the magistrate are invaded, that as conscience may not stand in the way of their lust, so not the magistrate in the way of their sin. That there were anciently such libertines in the church appeareth by Gal. v. 13, and 1 Peter ii. 16, and 1 Cor. vii. 20-23. Vain man would fain be free and yokeless, neither would he have his heart subject to God, nor his actions to man's censure. Partly because all errors are rooted in obstinacy, and that will bewray itself, not only in divine and spiritual, but in civil things: see 2 Peter ii. 10, But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness. Presumptuous are they and self-willed; they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.' Usually errors sear the conscience, and give the sinner a front and boldness, so that God is not only dishonoured, but civil societies disturbed, as Nazianzen observeth of the Arians. They began in blasphemous language against Christ, but end in tumultuous carriage against the peace of the commonwealth; for, saith he, how shall we hope that they will spare men that would not spare God? [131] Often it falleth out that they that please not God' are also contrary to all men,' 1 Thes. ii. 15. Tully, a heathen, ob serveth the same, Pietate adversus Deos sublatâ, fides etiam et societas humani generis, &c. Partly because opposition to magistracy is a kind of indirect blow and aim at God, and that either as it is his ordinance, Rom. xiii., or a kind of resemblance of his glory: I have said you are gods,' Ps. lxxxii. 6. So that it is a contempt of God in his image and picture. Look, as under the law God

forbade men cruelty to the beasts, as not to destroy the dam from the young, to seethe the kid in the mother's milk, and that such kind of prohibitions might be as a fence and rail about the life of man, so respect to magistracy is a kind of fence about his own dignity and divine glory. Magistrates being representative gods, ei'kon de basileu`s e'stin e'mpsuchos Theou; therefore through their sides they strike at God himself. Partly be cause the end of magistracy is to suppress evil, Rom. xiii. 5. An indefinite speech is equivalent to a universal in a matter of necessary duty, and the universal particle is expressed elsewhere: Prov. xx. 8, A king that sitteth upon the throne of judgment scattereth away all evil with his eyes'--all evil that falleth under his cognisance, whether it be of a civil or spiritual concernment. We must not limit and distinguish where the word doth not. I know there be some that do defalcate and cut off a great part of that duty which belongeth to the magistrate, confining his care only to things of a civil concernment, but preposterously, truths according to godliness belonging also to his inspection, upon which ground we are bound to pray for them, that they may come to the knowledge of the truth,' 1 Tim. ii. 2, and under them we may lead a quiet life in all godliness and honesty,' where it is plainly implied that the converted magistrate is to look to the countenance and maintenance of godliness as well as honesty. Well, then, sensual heretics being doubly obnoxious, as sensual, as venting errors, no wonder that they rise up in defiance of God's ordinance.

Use 1. It showeth us the evil of inordinate lustings. We may learn hence whence they proceed and whither they tend; they proceed from the pride and obstinacy of error; men dream, and are then licentious; and it tendeth to the casting off of all duty to God and man. Nip this disposition in the bud; it is in all our natures: Man is born like the

wild ass's colt,' Job xi. 12; not only for rudeness of understanding, but untamedness of affection. We love to break through all bonds and restraints, as if none were lord over us,' Ps. xii. 3.

Use 2. It informeth us what will be the issue when libertism .aboundeth, even an utter confusion. See Socrates Scholast., lib. v. Eccles. iv. ii, in proëm.: Nonnunquam tumultus ecclesiarum antegressi, reipublicae autem confusiones consecutae sunt--the ruin of the public weal is brought on by pestilent and evil doctrines. So our divines at the Synod of Dort: Cavendum est, ne qui magistratu connivente res novas in ecclesia moliantur, eodem etiam repugnante idem in republica efficiant. Tully, in his book De Legibus, saith, that the glory of Greece presently declined when the people were given malis studiis, malisque doctrinis, to evil manners and evil opinions. Let us lay these things to heart. I do not love to envy against the times, and to indulge the petulancy of a mistaken zeal, but the king's danger made Croesus' dumb son to speak.

Use 3. It may take off the prejudice that is often cast upon religion and the true ways of God. It is not truth that troubleth Israel, but error: 1 Kings xviii. 18, I have not troubled Israel, but thou and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord.' It is an old slander that strict religion is no friend to commonwealths. As soon as Christianity began to fly abroad in the world, it was objected against her, as if it was prejudicial to civil power and greatness, thereby to defeat her of the patronage of princes, and to hinder them from becoming nursing fathers,' Isa. xlix. 23. Magistracy being that power which is left, able to suppress or advance religion, the devil striveth all that he can to incense it against her. There is a natural and wakeful jealousy in princes over their dignities and prerogatives, and therefore the enemies of the church have ever

sought occasion to represent the people of God as enemies to their just power. So Christ was accused, Luke xxiii. 2, and Paul, Acts xxiv. 5; but altogether without cause. It is true, if religion be not kindly received it bringeth a judgment there where it is tendered, as the ark, when it was irreverently handled, brought a plague upon the Bethshemites, 1 Sam. vi. 19; but yet a blessing upon the house of Obed-Edom. So religion, where it is worthily treated, bringeth a blessing, otherwise a judgment. Let the world say what it will, it is a friend to magistracy, partly by its commands enforcing civil duties by a sacred bond and obligation. See Prov. xxiv. 21, Mat. xxii. 21, 1 Peter ii. 17, Eccles. viii. 2. Partly by its influence, meekening the hearts of men, and obliging them to faithfulness. Those that are faithful to God, I shall expect them to be faithful to me, said Constantine's father. [132] Certainly none live so sweetly under the same government as those that are united in the same faith, or cemented together with the same blood of Christ. Partly by the indulgence of God's providence, who is wont to favour those states where true religion is countenanced and vigorously owned. Oh! that our magistrates would regard this; their wisdom lieth in kissing the Son, Ps. ii. 10. Christ came not to gain persons, but nations to his obedience, and the more that is effected, though it be but by a public profession, the more safety may they expect; it is but a necessary thankfulness of the powers of the world to him to whom they owe their crowns, Prov. viii. 16. Let us pray for them that God would raise their zeal, and make them more cordial in the support of religion. A heathen said, Aut undiquaque religionem tolle aut usque quaque conserva--either wholly abandon religion, or maintain it more entirely.

Use 4. It showeth us what little reason magistrates have to countenance and spread their skirt over obstinate and impure heretics, such spirits

being usually most opposite to magistracy. They do but nourish a snake in their own bosoms, and cherish a faction that in time will eat out their bowels. Were there no respects of religion but only those of civil policy, they should not be so sleepy in this case; but you will say, Is it lawful for them to intermeddle in matters of religion, and to use any compulsive power? I answer--Yes, verily; they bear not the sword in vain.' We have frequent instances in the word of good kings whose zeal is commended for so doing, and frequent injunctions also to this purpose. The Levites are commended for assisting Moses in the execution of those that worshipped the calf, Exod. xxxii. 26-28. Abraham was to command his children, Gen. xviii. 29. Asa commanded Judah to worship God, and the thing was right in the eyes of the Lord, 2 Chron. xiv: 2-4. So see 2 Chron. xv. 23, and Ezra x. 8; so 2 Chron. xxxiv. 32, 33; and that promise, Isa. xliii. 23. I know I touch the sore of this age, and that this is a truth much prejudiced; therefore I shall first remove the prejudices, and then state the question.

First, Remove the prejudices. The first is taken from the fathers, or primitive Christians, who almost generally express themselves against planting religion by the sword and compulsive force. [133] Defendenda est religio non occidendo sed monendo, non soevitia sed patientia, so Lactantius, and suitably others. I answer--Were religion now to be planted, these sayings would take place. Pagans are not to be compelled, but enlightened; taught, not destroyed. And yet in such a case it is a question not easily resolved, whether the magistrate, if he had power, were not bound to compel his people, though professed pagans, to hear or attend upon the ministry of the word, it being the ordinary means of working faith. Augustine determineth that a Christian in such a case should improve his power for Christ. Felix necessitas quae ad meliora nos cogit, foris inveniatur necessitas et nascitur

intus voluntas; and a little after, non quia cogantur reprehendant, sed quae cogantur attendant--it is a favour that the magistrate will take care to bring them to the means of salvation. Again, in such a case they are to be kept from scandalising and blaspheming the true religion; that is the least a magistrate can do for Christ. But where a people are Christianised, and do profess the true religion, they should not be set free to atheism, error, and apostasy.

2. Another prejudice is, that the examples before mentioned are brought from the Old Testament, and so proper to the policy of the Jews. I answer--Some alleged were before Moses' law, as that of Abraham, and Jacob's commanding his family to put away their idols, Gen. xxxv. 2. And the injunctions in the Old Testament were built upon reasons of immutable equity, as God's glory, the danger of infection, &c., and so concern us as well as them; and the thing in question is agreeable to the light of nature, there being instances of pagan princes who were so far convinced of their duty to the true God, that they enjoined his worship, punishing the contempt thereof; see Ezra vi. 11; so Ezra vii. 26, and Dan. iii. 29. The Gentiles by the light of nature saw it to be suitable and agreeable to right reason. Arist. Polit., lib. vii. cap. 8, saith the first thing that falleth under a magistrate's care is e peri` to` theion epime'leia, a care of divine worship. The Athenians banished Protagoras for speaking doubtfully, and by way of extenuation of their religion, and burnt his books. Besides all this, the reason why we have only precedents in the Old Testament is, be cause the people of the Jews were the only state that were acquainted with the knowledge of the true God. We have some prophecies that the like should be done in the New, Isa. xlix. 23, and Zech. xiii., which concerneth gospel times, Isa. lx. 10, Rev. xxi. 24. We were worse provided for than they were in the Old Testament, if men that had the plague-sore of

heresy running upon them should without restraint be permitted to come into all companies.

3. Another prejudice is, it will make men hypocrites. I answer, with Athanasius--Would to God all were got so far as hypocrites, it would certainly be better for the Christian world; but however duties must not be left undone for ill consequences.

4. And another is, this will make way for persecution, and the calamities of the godly upon every change of the prince's mind. I answer--If the Lord see persecution necessary for the church, we must endure it, and so we shall be gainers both by good princes and bad: by the persecution of evil princes truth is made glorious; by the ministry of the good, error is suppressed and discountenanced. God would oblige us the more to pray for them in power, Ps. lxxii. 1, and 1 Tim. ii. 2; and he hath promised to hear such prayers, and provide nurse-fathers for the church. Sometimes a wicked magistrate, understanding his duty, may, by the overruling power of God in his conscience, be with held from persecuting the truth, yea, carried out to the suppression of error. When Paulus Samosatenus revolted from the orthodox Christian faith, and would yet retain the bishopric of Antioch, the business was brought to Aurelian, a pagan emperor, who removed him.

Secondly, I shall state the point, and show you how far compulsion is necessary. (1.) The magistrate should use no compulsion before care had for better information, and resolution of the doubting conscience; otherwise the practice were fell and cruel, like that of false religions, that brook no contradiction. Consciences scrupulous must not be too hardly dealt withal. To answer arguments by a prison or the fires is a Popish topic, [134] and to supply in rage what wanteth in strength of reason and clearness of light is but a butcherly violence; punishment and compulsion should not be hastened, as long as there

appeareth a desire to be informed, with meek endeavours after satisfaction. The apostle Paul is for two admonitions before church censure, Titus iii. 10; and the censure of the magistrate should not precede that of the church. (2.) In things indifferent, Christian toleration and forbearance takes place; all men never were, nor ever will be, in this world, of one and the same opinion, no more than of the same feature and complexion. There is a due latitude of allow able differences wherein the strong should bear with the weak, Rom. xv. 1; Eph. iv. 2; Gal. vi. 1. There are some lesser mistakes of conscience and infirmities incident to all men; namely, such as are consistent with faith, the main and fundamental truths and principles of salvation and charity, as not tending to foment faction in the church or sedition in the commonwealth; but if either of these limits be transgressed, circumstances may make these lesser things intolerable, as Paul withstood Peter to the face,' though otherwise he did not count the matter great, Gal. ii. 11; yet, when it was urged to the scandal of the churches, he thought it worthy of a contest. And here it belongeth to Christian princes, as to defend truth, so to see that peace be not violated for rites and ceremonies, and lesser differences that lie far from the heart of religion. I am persuaded that want of condescension to brethren hath brought all this confusion upon us, fec. (3.) A gross error kept secret cometh not under the magistrate's cognisance, but the diffusion and dissemination of errors he must take notice of; as when men infect others, and openly blaspheme Christian doctrine, he beareth not the sword in vain.' The mind and conscience, as to any power under God, is sui juris; thoughts are free. It is a saying in the civil law, Cogitationis poenam nemo patitur--all command is exercised about such things as fall within the knowledge of him that commandeth. Now, God only knoweth the heart, Quis mihi imponat necessitatem credendi quod

nolim, saith Lactantius, vel quod velim non credendi. Theodosius and Valentinian, in their law concerning the heretic, give this limitation, Sibi tantummodo nocitura sentiat, aliis obfutura non pandat--subscriptions and inquisitions into men's consciences, we cannot but justly condemn. (4.) Errors, according to their nature and degree, merit a different punishment, Jude 9, and Ezra vii. 26. (5.) Blasphemy, idolatry, and gross heresy are to be put into the same rank with gross, vicious actions, and supposed (if entertained after the receiving of the truth) to be done against light and conscience. Paul saith of the heretic that he is autoka'takritos, after due admonitions, Titus iii. 11. Therefore, in some cases, these may be punished with death, as Baal's prophets were slain, 1 Kings xviii. 40, Exod. xxi. 20, and Lev. xxiv. 16. But of the whole question elsewhere.

Obs. 6. Again, I observe from the same clause, that it is a sin to despise dominions. For it is here charged upon these seducers. It is a sin, because it is against the injunctions of the word, Rom. xiii. 1, Titus iii. 1. We are apt to forget our civil duties, or to count them arbitrary, as if the same authority had not established the second table as well as the first; and it is a sin, because magistracy is God's ordinance, the general instruction of it is of God, though the particular constitution of it be of man. Compare Rom. xiii. 1, with 1 Peter ii. 13. Government itself is of God; but this or that special manner or form of government is not determined by God, which is the difference between civil and ecclesiastical government, for there the particular form is specified, as well as the thing itself appointed. Again, it is a sin, because dominion preserveth human societies, so that we should trespass against the common good and public order if we should despise this help, yea, against the law of our own nature, man being by nature a sociable creature. Well, then, let us obey every

ordinance of man for the Lord's sake. The public welfare is concerned in our obedience, as also the honour of religion, both which should be very dear to one that feareth God. The public welfare: better bear many inconveniences than embroil the country in war and blood. We are bidden be subject, skoliois, to the froward,' 1 Peter ii. 18. And the honour of religion: God will have the world know that Christianity is a friend to civil policy; see 1 Peter ii. 15, and Mat. xvii. 27. We learn hence, too, that they are but libertines that think that religion freeth them from the subjection which they owe to God or man; it doth not exempt us from our duty, but enable us to perform it. Many take such a liberty in civil things that they begin to grow contemptuous even in divine, and so cast off God's yoke as well as the magistrate's.

Obs. 7. The last expression is that, speak evil of dignities, or of glories, by which probably church officers are intended, such being spoken against in that age, 3 John 10, and expressed by the word glories, a term given both to the apostles and other officers of the church. Note, there is a respect due to persons invested with church power. This is established by God's ordinance, and therefore should not be set at nought; neither should the persons invested with it be evil spoken of. That obedience is required to them, see Heb. xiii. 17; and respect and honour, see 1 Thes. v. 12, 13, and 1 Tim. v. 17; that they should not be lightly evil spoken of, 1 Tim. v. 19. Though for their persons and outward estate they are mean and despicable, yet they are called to a high employment, and have the promise of a great power and presence with them,: Mat. xvi. 19, John xx. 23; their regular proceedings are ratified in the court of heaven. We are fallen into an age wherein no persons are more contemptible than ministers, nothing less valued than church authority: it is become the eyesore of the times. Not to speak of those barking Shimeis the Quakers, and their

foul-mouthed language, taught them by the father of lies; surely others have not such a reverence of God's ordinance as they should have.

[129] Mundus senescens patitur phantasias.'--Gerson.

[130] Anima quae fornicata est a Deo casta esse non potest.'--Aug.

[131] Pos de anthro'pou emellon phei'desthai oi tes theo'tetos me` pheisa'menoi.'--Nazian. Orat. xxv.

[132] Pos ga`r a` po'te basilei pi'stin phula'xai tou`s peri` to` krei'tton alontas agno'monos.'--Vid. Euseb. lib. ii. de Vitâ, Constant.; Sozom. lib. vi.

[133] Austin changed his mind twice, and was at last for compulsion.

[134] Ex officina carnificum petunt argumenta, et quos sermonibus decipere non possunt, gladiis clamant esse ferieudos.'--Ambros.

Ver. 9. Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil (he

disputed about the body of Moses}, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.

The apostle had charged the seducers, against whom he wrote, with opposition of magistracy, and contemptuous speaking against those lights which God had set in the church; he now cometh to aggravate their effrontery and impudence by the carriage of Michael the arch angel towards the devil. In the comparison there is an argument a majore ad minus, from the greater to the less, which is evidently seen in all the circumstances of the text.

1. In the persons contending, Michael the archangel with the devil. If Michael, so excellent in nature, so high in office, contending with Satan, an impure spirit, already judged by God, used such modesty and awe, who are they, sorry creatures, that dare despise persons invested with the dignity and height of magistracy?

2. There is an aggravation from the cause, when he disputed with him about the body of Moses,' a matter just, and in which the mind of God was clearly known; and dare they speak evil of things they know not'? that is, in matters so far above their reach to take upon them to ensure [135] and determine?

3. There is an aggravation taken from the disposition of the angel, he durst not bring against him a railing accusation.' His holiness would not permit him to deal with the devil in an indecent and injurious manner. But these rashly belch out their reproaches and curses against superiors without any fear.

4. In the manner of speech, the Lord rebuke thee.' The whole judgment

of the cause is referred to God; but these Gnostics take upon them as if the whole judgment of things, persons, and actions were left in their hands, as our modern Quakers take upon them to curse and to pronounce dreadful judgments upon God's most holy servants according to their own pleasure. The sum of the whole is this, if an angel that is great in power durst not bring against the worst creatures, in the very heat of contention about a good cause, any undue language and reproach, certainly it is a horrible impudence in men to speak contemptuously, yea, in a cursing and blaspheming manner, of those whom God hath advanced to superiority in church or commonwealth.

This is the sum of the words; but because this scripture is difficult, before I come to the observations, I shall premise some explicatory questions.

Quest. 1. Whence had the apostle this story; the scriptures making no mention of it?

Ans. The substance of it is in scripture. We read, Deut. xxxiv. 6, that the body of Moses was secretly buried by the Lord. But now for the circumstances of it. He might receive them by divine revelation, which are here authorised and made scripture; and indeed it is usual with the penmen of holy writ to add such circumstances as were not mentioned in the place where the history was first recorded, as in Exodus we read of the opposition of the magicians to Moses; but their names are mentioned, 2 Tim. iii. 8, As Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses.' The whole story of their contest with him is in the Talmud; and in Apuleius, and other histories, we read that these were famous magicians. So Ps. cv. 18, we read that Joseph's feet were hurt in fetters, and he was laid in iron,' which, in the story in Genesis, appeareth not; so Moses quaking, Heb. xii. 21, and the following of the water of the rock, 1 Cor. x. 1, 2. Those things might be received by

tradition or divine inspiration, or were extant m some known book and record then in use. Origen quoteth a book, peri` anale'pseos tou Mo'seos, about the assumption of Moses, for this history, some remainders of which are in the books of the Jews unto this day. Capellus, I remember, repeateth a long tale out of the book called Rabboth, or the mystical expositions of the Pentateuch, concerning the altercation between Michael and Samael, or the archangel and the devil, about the body, or rather soul, of Moses; and how God, to save it from Samael, sucked out his soul from the body by a kiss: but the story is so fabulous that I shall not repeat it. See Capelli Spicileg. in locum, pp. 128, 129.

Quest. 2. Is this a real history, or an allusion?

Ans. There are three opinions about this. (1.) One is, that it is a figurative expression of God's care for his church; and they that go this way by the body of Moses understand either the whole body of the Levitical worship, or else the community of Israel, represented in Joshua the high priest, who stood before the angel of the Lord,' Zech. iii. 1, 2, and Satan at his right hand ready to resist him; and the Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, the Lord, that hath chosen Jerusalem, rebuke thee.' In Joshua the Levitical worship newly restored is figured, and the angel of the Lord, before whom he stood, is Christ, the judge, advocate, and defender of the church; and the Lord, that is, the Lord Christ, called the angel' before, puts forth the efficacy of his mediation against this malicious opposition of Satan. So some accommodate this text to the sense of that place; and the main reason is, because of the form here used, The Lord rebuke thee.' This sense is argute, but not so solid. Junius, who first propounded it, seemeth to distrust it. The reason is of no force, for the same form might be used on divers occasions; and my reasons against it are, because these

expressions are typical and visional. Now to make a type of a type, especially in the New Testament, which usually explaineth the difficulties of the Old, seemeth irrational; and though by Michael Christ may be intended, yet the change from Joshua to Moses is too much forced. (2.) Others conceive that it is not a history, but a Talmudic fiction and parable; and that Jude, in citing it, doth not approve the story as true, but only urgeth it upon them for their instruction, who were mightily pleased with this kind of fables: as the fathers against the heathens did often make use of their own stories and fictions concerning their gods; such condescensions are frequent. But against this opinion; it seemeth to be urged here by way of downright assertion, not as an argument ad homines, and by Peter on the like occasion: 2 Peter ii. 11, Whereas angels, that are greater in might and power, bring not a railing accusation against them before the Lord.' I say, he doth not urge it as a Jewish fable, but as a real argument taken from the nature of the holy angels. (3.) There is another opinion, that it is a real history, namely, that the devil was earnest to discover the place of Moses' grave, and to take up his body again, wherein he was resisted by Michael, some principal and chief angel, and his attempts made fruitless by this holy and modest address to God, The Lord rebuke thee.'

Quest. 3. The next question is, who is meant by Michael the arch angel?

Ans. Michael is the name of his person, and archangel of his office. Michael signifieth he is strong God, or who is like the strong God, and therefore some apply it to Jesus Christ, who in many places of scripture is set forth as head of angels.' See Exod. iii. 2 with 4, and Exod.. xxiii. 20-22; Gen. xlviii. 16; and in Dan. xii. 1, and x. 13. Jesus Christ seemeth there to be intended by Michael, he being the Prince of Israel. But there is no necessity of interpreting those

places in Daniel of Christ, much less is he intended here, it being beneath the dignity of his person to contend with the devil, which though he did in his humiliation, Mat. iv., yet to do it before that was unworthy of him; besides, that phrase, he durst not, is not so applicable to Jesus Christ, and besides, Christ and the archangel are in scripture distinguished, yea, Peter applieth this to angels in general, whereas angels,' 2 Peter ii. 11. But you will object, how can any creature be called Michael, equal to God in power and strength? I answer--It may be taken (1.) Absolutely, and so it is proper to Christ, who is God's fellow, Zech. xiii. 7; (2.) Comparatively, and so it may be applied to him who is highest in dignity among the creatures, and is next to God in excellency and strength, and so it may imply the highest angel, as in hell there is a Beelzebub, or a chief devil; therefore it is said, Mat. xxv., The devil and his angels.' So in heaven there may be a Michael, one highest in order among the blessed angels.

Quest. 4. Why should the devil so earnestly dispute about the body of Moses?

Ans. The rabbins, among others of their fables, interpret it of the desire which the devil had to destroy Moses by death, there being no man like Moses, that saw God face to face.' Therefore his rage was great against him, and he sought to destroy him; and to this purpose applies that of the psalmist: Ps. xxxvii. 32, The wicked watcheth the righteous, and seeketh to slay him.' Among Christians some say this striving was before, some after, his burial; some before his burial, as Junius, that his body might not be removed out of sight, but he might satisfy his rage and malice upon it in abusing it. But that is not so probable, the body being suddenly disposed of by God to some secret place of burial. Some say after burial the devil sought to take it up again, and upon that ground arose this contention between him and

Michael. But why should the devil contend so much about the buried body of Moses? To answer this we must consider what might be the ends of God's concealing his burial. Possibly this might be done lest in a preposterous zeal they should yield honour to the dead body of such a famous and excellent prophet, and so. it might become a snare to the people. Possibly there might be something typical in it--the dead body of Moses was buried in an unknown place, lest they should take it up, and carry it into the land of Canaan--to signify the abolition of the legal ordinances, under the evangelic state. So that to revive the antiquated ceremonies of the law now is to but rake up Moses' dead body. Now the devil may be supposed to contend for the body of Moses, partly out of obstinate curiosity, whereby sinful creatures are strongly inclined to desire things forbidden; partly to defeat the purposes of God; but chiefly by dead Moses to set up himself in the hearts of the living, seeking thereby to provoke them to a worship of his relics or remains.

These questions premised, the explication of the words is easy. Michael the archangel; that is, some principal angel deputed to this ministry and service. When he contended with the devil, diabo'lo diakrino'menos. The word signifieth an altercation or contention in words, a dispute with the devil. About the body of Moses, about the knowledge of the place of his burial. Durst not, his fear of God, modesty, and meekness would not permit him. Bring against him a railing accusation, kri'sin epenenkein blasphemi'as, the judgment of blasphemy,' or such unworthy language as the heat of contention is wont to provoke and extort from us. But said, The Lord rebuke thee. It is a modest referring of the matter to God's cognisance, or a prayer that the Lord would check this malicious opposition.

Observations are many:--

Obs. 1. Observe, that to aggravate their virulency, he compares it with the modesty of an archangel; whence note, that pride and contempt in them of a low degree is less tolerable than in those whom God hath advanced to a higher rank and sphere. Partly because these have less temptation to be proud; and when a sin is committed without a temptation it is a sign that the heart is strongly inclined that way, as there needeth no force to make a bowl run down hill, because of its natural tendency. Their wants and meanness should keep them humble; we look that the fire should go out when the fuel is taken away. When men have nothing to be proud of, the want of an opportunity should make men at least forbear the sin. Partly because they have more reason to be humble; as the rich and great have reason to be thankful, so the poor have reason to be humble. With a low condition there should be a lowly mind: It is better to be of a humble spirit with the lowly,' &c., Prov. xvi. 19. Well, then, poverty and pride are most unsuitable; pride is allowable in none, but in the poor most prodigious. It is an odd sight to see those of the highest rank turn fashionists, and display the ensigns of their own vanity; but when servants, and those of a low degree, put themselves into the garb, these are prodigies of pride. As the modesty of the archangel was an upbraiding to the pride of the Gnostics, so should those that are advanced to the highest degree of honour shame the meaner sort with their comely plainness. Again, to see men of the greatest sufficiencies humble in style and mind, and denying their great parts for the sake of the simplicity of the gospel; it is a shame that persons of low parts should be puffed up, and appear flaunting in the pomp of words, or blustering in Greek and Latin sentences, as if all reading and learned worth were their own. The apostle condemned the Corinthians for the pompous use of tongues in the church, and shameth them by his own example: 1 Cor. xiv. 18, I thank

God I speak with tongues more than you all; yet rather,' &c.

Again, to take down pride, look to others whom God hath set higher, and yet are more humble, as usually the higher the sun the less shadows it casteth. Usually God's children carry a low mind in a high condition, James i. 10; they are rich, yet made low,' that is, lowly.' If, in the fulness of riches, honours, parts, and enjoyments, they are so meek and humble, why should I, that have less temptations, be more proud? They are lifted up by God, but not in their own spirits. I am a worm, in a much lower sphere, and yet of a prouder heart. They are affable, meek, modest, why am I so fierce and impatient of contradiction? Once more, if the judgments of God light upon greater personages for their pride, say what will become of me? In me it is more odious. If God destroy those whose height is as the height of cedars,' Amos ii. 9, surely the reed should tremble. Many times mean and base people, that have no tincture of ingenuity, and are of no name or quality in the world, have pride enough to be bitter enemies to God's children. David saith, Ps. xxxv. 15, The abjects gathered themselves together to make songs against me,' when as God rebuketh kings for their sakes.' If he visit the throne, will he not visit the ale-bench? What scorn will he cast upon this saucy dust? these spiteful worms, that have only malice enough to snarl and can go no further? If the great men of the earth' tremble, shall the bondmen' go free? Rev. vi. 15. But chiefly upon this occasion would I commend to you the example of the Lord Christ to take down pride. This is an example that will shame us indeed, whatever the pride be. Are you puffed up with pride of vain conceit? Christ stripped himself of all his glory, Phil. ii. 7. With pride of revenge? Men are loath to strike sail, to seek to an enemy; they scorn it. Jesus Christ, though such an excellent person, loved us first,' 1 John iv. 19, sued to his enemies. Is it disdain of our condition, pride of murmurings? He

made himself a worm and no man,' and when he was rich in the glory of the Godhead, became poor for our sakes:' Mat. x. 24, The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord.' If we be scorned, would we be better dealt with than our master was? Many times you have seen a master do the work of a servant to shame him; so did Christ. Do but think of Christ's excellency and your own base condition; as here, to shame the brutish Gnostics, the apostle telleth them they took more upon them than a glorious angel.

Obs. 2. Again, from the archangel's contending about the body of Moses. The devil would discover Moses' grave, and the archangel is ready to resist him. The note is, that God hath angels and archangels that are always ready to defend a good cause. They are many; the king of heaven hath a brave court: Dan, vii. 10, A thousand thousand minister to him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stand before him.' Christ saith he could pray for twelve legions' in an instant, Mat. xxvi. 53. Now a legion, in the least computation, is six thousand foot and seven hundred horse. They are able, they excel in strength.' One angel slew a hundred and eighty-five thousand in one night, Isa. xxxvii. 36. They are always ready, attending on God's commands, Ps. ciii. 20. They rejoice in names of service more than names of honour. They are swift in execution; they are described to have six wings apiece,' Isa. vi. 2; as being at the Lord's beck, and ready to execute his command as soon as they hear the word. All which informeth us (1.) Of the danger of wicked men in opposing a good cause; they fight not only against men, but against angels. (2.) That angels have more to do in human affairs than we are aware of. There are evil angels assisting in the counsels against the church, and good angels resisting, in those days of conflict. The combat is not only between men and men, but between angels and angels, Dan. x. 13. The protection of the holy angels is

invisible, but true and real. (3.) Here is comfort to God's children when they are embarked in a hazardous but in a holy business; there are far more with us than can be against us,' 2 Kings vi. 16. There is God the Father's power on the church's side; the Son puts forth the strength of his mediation, Zech. iii. 2; the Spirit comforts and animateth us, and then holy angels are employed as instruments. The Lord Jesus and his angels will stick to the church when none else dare: Dan. x. 21, There is none holdeth with me in these things but Michael your prince.' When all human strength faileth, Christ by their ministry can uphold the affairs of the church; omnipotency is a great deep. Usually we look to means, and can better conceive of the operations of finite creatures than of the infinite God; therefore doth the Lord represent the help of the church as managed by these powerful instruments. Only now take heed that you do not betray your succours, nor defraud yourselves of their protection. (1.) By neglecting to seek to the God of angels: Dan. x. 12, From the first day thou didst set thine heart to understand, and didst chasten thyself before thy God,' &c. We are not to pray to them, but for them, to the Lord. (2.) By unwarrantable practices, for then you join with Satan to their grief: Ps. xxxiv. 7, The angel encampeth about them that fear him.' A good cause should be well managed, and then trust God, who, if he seeth fit to glorify himself by our deliverance, rather than our sufferings, can find means enough to save us when men fail.

Obs. 3. Observe again, that angels have a care not only of the souls, but of the bodies, yea, even of the dead bodies, of the saints, as Michael disputed with the devil about the body of Moses.' That you may understand the particular care which the angels have about the people of God, I shall open it to you in several propositions:--

1. It is certain the angels had a great care about the people of God in

ancient times. Examples are found everywhere in the word of God. Lot was led out of Sodom by angels; Daniel taught by an angel; Cornelius answered by an angel; an angel withstood Balaam in the way, Num. xxii.; an angel walked with the three children in the fiery furnace, Dan. iii. 25; an angel shut up the mouths of lions that they might not hurt Daniel in the den, Dan. vi. 22; an angel comforted Paul in the tempest, Acts xxvii. 23, 24. Scarce any remarkable thing befell the people of God, but it was accomplished by their ministry.

2. The ministry of angels, though not so visible and sensible as heretofore, is not wholly ceased. The privilege of it belongeth to all saints: Heb. i, 14 Are they not ministering spirits sent forth for the heirs of salvation?' All that are called to inherit a blessing were under their tutelage. So see Ps. xci. 12; and those instances alleged in the former proposition are patterns and precedents by which we may know what to expect. Their tutelage then was more visible and sensible, because the church, newly planted, needed to be confirmed; but God would have us live by faith, and expect all our supports in a more spiritual way; though we have not visible apparitions, yet we have real experiments of their succour; the evil angels appear not, yet we doubt not of the hurt done by them. In the first times of the gospel Christ's bodily presence was necessary, but now only his spiritual.

3. The proper object of their ministry and care are the children of God, wicked men are not under their covert and protection; it is true, they may be under a general care, as Hagar and Ishmael, who are set out in scripture as the types of those that are rejected by the Lord; yet, Gen. xxi. 17, An angel of the Lord came and stood by Hagar, and said, The Lord Lath heard the cry of the lad.' Though possibly this might be, as he was Abraham's son; dogs in the house have the crumbs.

4. The ministry of the angels is over all the children of God, without

exception; not only Moses, but the meanest saint is under their care. God's love to his people is not dispensed with respect to their peculiar pomp and greatness: Mat. xviii. 10, Offend not these little ones, for their angels behold my Father's face.' It is chiefly meant of those that are little in esteem and account in the world; the message of Christ's birth was brought by angels to shepherds, feeding their flocks in the fields, Luke ii.

5. As no saints are excepted from receiving the benefit of their ministry, so no angels are excepted from being employed in it. Michael contendeth with Satan, and the apostle saith, ouchi` pa'ntes, Are they not all,' &c., Heb. i. 14. The archangels themselves are ministering spirits;' it is a rash boldness in the schoolmen to exempt any from this office. What an instance is here of God's love, that the highest angel should not be exempted from a care of the lowest saint!

6. That every single believer hath his proper and allotted angel to attend him from his birth to his death, is rather matter of problem and dispute than positive assertion; there are some scriptures make it probable, but not certain. Sometimes we read of one angel attending many men, and at other times of many angels attending one man, as Jacob had many, Gen. xxxii. 1, 2, God's host,' &c.; so Elisha, 2 Kings vi. 17, Elisha prayed and the mountains were full of chariots and horses of fire,' that is, of angels coming to offer help in that case. It is true, the opinion of a particular angel guardian was ancient. Plato saith, eka'sto o`n e'leto dai'mona tou'ton phu'laka xumpe'mpein tou bi'ou kai` apoplerote`n ton airethe'nton, and among the ancient fathers places of scripture are brought for it that are full of probability, not cogency. One is that of the Old Testament, Gen. xlviii. 16, The angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads,' &c., in which passage he seemeth to ascribe his preservation and deliverance to some

particular angel; but to this may be replied what was before alleged of the host of God' going along with him; and by this angel is meant the Lord Christ, who is alone the object of worship and adoration; and who, because of the frequency of his personal appearance and mediation between God and man, is set forth under the term of an angel. The rabbins expound it of the angel of God's presence.' Another place is Mat. xviii. 10, Their angels see my Father's face;' not the angels, but their angels; but the word there may only imply their common interest in the whole host of God. Christ doth not say that every one of them hath an angel. As, for instance, it may be said, These prisoners have their keepers, these scholars have their masters, these soldiers have their captains; it doth not follow that every one hath a particular keeper, master, captain, &c. Another place is Acts xii. 15. When the maid said Peter was at the door, they, distrusting her report, said, It is his angel.' This place may be answered thus--That sayings of men in scripture are not all scripture, or a part of our rule; and that many things were spoken by the disciples in their rudeness which are not altogether justifiable; but because this place is the main, let me examine it a little. Three opinions there are about the place. Some understand it appellatively, it is his angel, or messenger, sent by him out of prison. [136] But Rhoda heard Peter's voice, and that was the ground of the sayings. Others understand it of some angel come to give notice of his death; but that is groundless. Lastly, some, as Chrysostom, of a particular tutelar angel. But whence doth it appear that these angels had the shape and habit of those they kept? And angels do not use to knock at doors, and wait for opening; and if Peter had a special angel, it followeth not that all have; the meaning probably is, it is a spirit that hath assumed his shape.

7. Though it be not certain that every particular believer hath an

angel deputed to his attendance, yet in the general there is an assurance of a guardianship and tutelage from the angels; the heirs of salvation' have them among them. If the whole city hath a sufficient guard, it is as good as if every citizen had a distinct soldier to defend him; nay, it is more for our comfort, that we have many rather than one; we have to do with many enemies, and therefore we need much assistance: Ps. xci. 11, He shall give his angels charge over thee.' Many angels are charged with our safety, and though they be not so particularly conversant about us as the other opinion conceiveth, yet they behold the face of God,' and are always in his presence, and wait for his command,' Ps. ciii. 20, who so careth for every one as if he had none to care for besides him.

8. This tutelage is from their first conception in the womb till the translation of body and soul into glory. Survey all the passages of life from the womb to the grave, nay, after death, till the resurrection, the ministry of angels doth not wholly cease. Their care beginneth as soon as the child is quickened in the womb, for then they have another distinct charge to look after; and as they are servants of providence, by their help they are born and brought into the world; God's providence taketh date thence, Gal. i. 15; and they, I say, are instruments of providence; they watch over us in infancy and childhood; little ones are committed to their custody, and babes and sucklings have their angels, Mat. xviii. Jesus Christ was provided for in his cradle by an angel, Mat. ii. 13. The devil rampeth about the elect whilst they are yet in their swaddling-clothes. That expression, Rev. xii., of the dragon's seeking to devour the man-child as soon as he was born,' is figurative, but it alludeth to what is true. Again, as we grow up they rejoice at our conversion, Luke xv. We read of joy in heaven over a sinner that repenteth;' you cannot gratify the angels

more than in your conversion to God; the devil seeks to hinder it as much as he can, but they rejoice when a brand is plucked out of the burning,' Zech. iii. Again, after conversion, they watch over us in duty, and danger, and temptations. In duties; where Satan is most busy to hinder, Zech. iii. 1, they are most helpful: the angels are in the assemblies of the faithful, 1 Cor. xi. 10. So in dangers; when Peter was in prison, God sendeth him an angel to bring him out, Acts xii. Ruffinus speaketh of a young man, a martyr on the rack, that had his face wiped by an angel, and refreshed by him in the midst of his pains. Nay, in casual dangers, which we cannot foresee and prevent: Ps. xci. 12, He shall give his angels charge over thee, that thou dash not thy foot against a stone.' So in temptations; Mat. iv. 11, they ministered' to Christ when he was tempted by the devil; they came to show how God will deal with his people in like cases. Once more, they are with us to comfort us in death; in the midst of his agonies the Lord Jesus was comforted and refreshed by an angel, Luke xxii. 43; so they are with the faithful, helping and easing them in their sicknesses. After death they carry our souls to heaven, as Lazarus was carried into Abraham's bosom, Luke xvi. 22. Though the body had not the honour of a pompous burial, yet the soul is solemnly conveyed by angels, and gathered up into the communion of the souls of just men made perfect; as Christ himself also ascended into heaven in the company of angels, Acts i. Once more, after death they guard our bodies in the grave, as the angels guarded Christ's sepulchre, Mat. xxviii. 2-4. God did set his guards, as well as the high priests. Their last ministry and service about the faithful is to gather up their bodies at the last day: They shall gather up the elect from the four winds,' Mat. xxiv. 31, and then their office and charge ceaseth.

9. This tutelage is ever administered according to God's pleasure: Ps.

ciii. 21, Ye ministers of his that do his pleasure;' not their own, not ours, but his pleasure. The help of angels is more powerful, but no more absolute, than the help of other means, for it dependeth still on the will of God, as all other means of defence and outward support do; their employment is to attend us, and serve us, according to the Lord's direction.

Let us now apply what hath been spoken.

Use 1. First, it serveth for information, to show us:--

1. The care of God for the elect. He engageth his own power for our preservation, as also the mediation of Christ, the conduct of the Spirit, and the ministry of angels. In Zech. i. you have a scheme of providence; the man that stood among the myrtle trees' sent the angels to and fro throughout the earth, and then they came and gave him an account of what passed in the world. The man is Jesus Christ, who, to prefigure his incarnation, is thus represented; and he hath all the angels at his command, to send them forth as the condition of his church requireth; and they, as his intelligencers and agents, are to bring him notice how all affairs and matters pass in the world. Thus doth the Lord set forth himself to our capacity, and that we, who are used to means, may the better believe in him.

2. The condescension and humility of the angels; they rejoice in names of service more than in names of honour, and will perform offices of respect to the meanest creatures,--an angel clothed with light and glory would come to the shepherds,--and do not refuse at Christ's direction to wait upon those who are despised and rejected of men.

3. It informeth us of their man-kindness, which shameth our envy; their love is great to mankind, and are affectionately desirous of our good, and therefore decline no office of love and service to us. They rejoiced when the world was created as a dwelling-place for man Job

xxxviii. 7; and again at the coming of Christ, which was man's restoring, Luke ii. 13; and so at the calling and conversion of a sinner, Luke xv. 7, when we come to be possessed of our privileges in Christ.

4. It informeth us of the dignity of the saints. What a price doth the Lord and the holy angels set upon the meanest Christian; God's own court is their guard. Certainly a godly man, though of the meanest calling, should not be contemptible; there is somewhat in holiness more than the world seeth, some worth in it, or else God would not set such a guard upon it, a guard so full of state and strength. It was a mighty favour for Mordecai to have a courtier of a great king to wait upon him for one hour: we have angels that still attend and wait for our good.

5. It informeth us of the obedience of the angels in the lowest services. God saith, Go, and they go, though it be to wait upon poor and mean creatures. We usually dispute commands when we should practise them, and stick at duties that have anything of abasement and self-denial in them. In the Lord's Prayer we are brought to this pattern, Mat. vi., Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven,' that is, by the holy angels; it should be done by us with like readiness and submission. No office or employment that God calleth us to should be looked upon as too mean and base for us; the angels, that excel in strength, when God commandeth, being willing to condescend to the guardianship of men.

Use 2. Secondly, it serveth for exhortation to the children of God:--

1. To wait for the angels' help. Do you keep in God's ways in your callings, and you shall have safety and defence, when the Lord sees it fit for you. Remember you are a spectacle to God, men, and angels, in all your actions, trials, and sufferings, and bear up with a confidence becoming Christians. Though you can do little as to the promotion of

Christ's interest, what cannot God do by his angels?

2. To behave ourselves as those that do expect this help, not tempting God, not grieving the angels. We should take heed how we carry ourselves in regard of this honourable attendance; our sins and vanity offendeth them, as it doth God. Lot was a man of a mixed nature, yet vexed with the impure conversation' of the Sodomites, 2 Peter ii. 8. Angels are pure and holy creatures, that still abode in the truth; pride, lust, and vanity is very offensive to them, especially impurities and indecencies in God's worship, about which they have a special attendance; therefore the apostle biddeth the women to cover their heads because of the angels, 1 Cor. xi. 10, their fashion being to come into the congregation with loose dishevelled locks; he mindeth them of the presence of the angels. We may use a like argument to women to cover their naked breasts, now their immodesty is grown so impudent as to out-face the ordinances of God.

3. To observe this when it is bestowed upon us: The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him;' and then, Oh! come, taste and see,' Ps. xxxiv. 7, 8. When deliverances are strange and wonderful, and there is the least concurrence of visible causes to defend Christ's interest, remember that all things, visible and invisible, were created by Christ and for Christ, even thrones, principalities, and powers,' Col. i. 16.

Use 3. Thirdly, Here is reproof to wicked men, that perform the devils' ministry, act the part of the bad angels rather than the good, despise, slander, oppose, seduce, and tempt the children of God. How darest thou despise those whom the angels honour? You think them unworthy of your countenance and company, when angels disdain not to vouchsafe them their service and attendance. You slander those whom they defend, and oppose and persecute them whom they are engaged to protect, and wrong

them whose angels behold the face of God, and tempt and seduce them whom they rejoice to see brought home to God.

Obs. 4. I have but one word more, and I have done with this point. Get this interest if you would be under this tutelage; get an interest in Christ, and then you get an interest in the angels, their angels,' &c., Mat. xviii. 10. They are not called God's, but theirs. Hereafter the saints shall be isa'ngeloi, Like the angels-in heaven,' Luke xx. 36; and here, till we have this glory, we shall have their defence.

In the next place, somewhat may be observed from the style and character of this angel, Michael, the archangel.' That there is an order among the angels, both good and bad; they have their distinct heads; we read of Michael, and we read of Beelzebub; there is an order in hell, thence that expression, Mat. xxv. 41, The devil and his angels,' which seemeth to intimate a prince among the unclean spirits; much more is there an order among the good angels. God, that made all things in order, would not endure confusion among those heavenly creatures, for that would seem to infringe their happiness; but now to define this order, and the several degrees of it, were but to intrude ourselves into things we have not seen,' Col. ii. 16. Cyril [137] calleth it te`n ton tolmeron kurio'teta, the domineering of bold spirits. The schoolmen take upon them as if they knew all the particulars of their government and distinction; but in things not revealed there can be no certainty. The apostle indeed speaketh of several ranks of in visible creatures: Col. i. 16, Thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers;' but who can particularly define their office and order? A distinction there is, but what it is we know not; however the general consideration is useful; partly to show us the necessity of order and subordination; no creatures can subsist without it. They that are against magistracy are against peace and happiness;

the angels and devils are not without their heads and princes. Partly to represent to us the majesty of God; he hath angels, and archangels, thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers. Our eyes are dazzled at the magnificence and lustre of earthly kings, when we see them surrounded with dukes, marquises, and earls, and barons. Oh! what poor things are these to those orders and degrees of angels with which God is environed! Partly to acquaint us with the happiness of the everlasting estate. It is the misery of the wicked that they shall be cast out with the devil and his angels,' and our happiness that we shall make up one church and assembly with angels and archangels, Heb. xii.

Obs. 5. Somewhat may be observed from the matter of the contention, the body of Moses, which the devil would abuse to idolatry; that is the reason why he was so earnest in the contest. Note, that the devil loveth idolatry; all false worships, either directly or by consequence, tend to the honour of the devil; therefore idol-feasts are called the table of devils,' 1 Cor. x. 21. Now it is observable that those sacrifices which were offered to the true God, but in an unbecoming manner, are called the sacrifices of devils,' Lev. xvii. 7, compare it with ver. 3, 4. Though they killed a goat, or an ox, or a lamb to the Lord for a sacrifice, because it was in the camp, and not before the tabernacle, God saith, They shall no more offer sacrifice to devils.' So it is said of God's own people, Deut. xxxii. 17, They sacrifice to devils, and not unto God,' In their intention it was unto God, but in the issue and necessary interpretation of it, it was to the devil. Now the devil delights in idols and false worships, partly in malice to God. The Lord above all things is most tender of his worship, and therefore Satan is most busy to corrupt it. There are two things that are dear to God--his truth and his worship. Now Satan bendeth his

strength and spite to corrupt his truth with error, and his worship with superstition. Partly in malice and spite to men. God is a jealous God; Satan knoweth that corruptions of worship do not go unrevenged: Ps. xvi. 4, Sorrows shall be multiplied on them that hasten after another God.' Of all sinners they shall not escape; the severest revenges of God have been occasioned by prevarications in worship; as Lev. x. 3, on Aaron's sons strange fire in the censers brought down strange fire from heaven; so 1 Sam. vi. 20, there were fifty thousand Bethshemites slain for an undue circumstance; so the breach made upon Uzzah,' 2 Sam. vi. 6. 7. The devil is not ignorant of this, and therefore, longing for man's destruction, seeketh to hasten it as much as he can by idolatry and false worship. Partly out of pride; he is constant in evil, and abode in pride; though he abode not in the truth, he would fain be worshipped, and assumed into a fellowship of the divine honour and glory. He saith to Christ, Mat. iv. 9, Fall down and worship me, and I will give thee all these things.' The devil is no changeling; though he doth not retain his place, he retaineth his pride: nothing so pleasing to him as worship and adoration, and so he can get it any way from the creatures, he is contented.

Use 1. Well, then, it showeth us:--

1. What care we should take to be right in worship, both for the object and manner. It is idolatry not only to worship false gods in the place of the true God, but to worship the true God in a false manner, and both sorts do gratify the devil. W r hen he cannot hold the people under utter blindness and paganism, he is glad if he can draw them to undue rites and ceremonies in worship; therefore let us hate the least kind of idolatry, if we would not prog for the devil's kingdom. David saith, Ps. xvi. 4, I will not take their name into my lips;' that he would abhor the very mention of idols. So Hosea ii. 16, God would no

more be called Baal, though it signified Lord and husband, because the title had been applied to idols. The Israelites, when they took cities, they changed their names if they had any tincture of idolatry: Num. xxxii. 38, Nebo and Baalmeon, their names being changed;' so exact should we be in keeping from idols.

2. Let ns beware of idolatry. Satan loveth it, and that is motive enough. We should hate as Christ hateth, and love as he loveth, Rev. ii. 6; and on the contrary, love what Satan hateth, and hate what he loveth. Naturally we are wondrous prone to this sin, and therefore idolatry is reckoned as a work of the flesh,' Gal. v. 20. Man naturally hath a corrupt and working fancy and imagination, which, depending upon sense, formeth fleshly conceptions and notions of God; and therefore are we so prone to err in this worship. It is not needful, I hope, to speak to you of paganish and popish idolatry; let me only now dissuade you:--

First, From making the true God an idol in your thoughts, by forming apprehensions unworthy of the glory of his essence: Ps. l. 21, Thou thoughtest that I was altogether like thyself.' Now, thus we do when we conceive him of such a mercy as to hold fellowship with one that continueth under the full power of his sins, so weak as not to be able to help in deep extremities, Zech. viii. 6, of a rigorous and revengeful disposition, as not to pardon injuries and offences upon submission and repentance, Hosea xi. 8, of a fickle nature, so as to fail in his promises, Num. xxiii. 19. Thus it is easy to turn the true God into an idol of our own brains. To remedy this, consider God in his works and in Christ. In his works: Cyril, I remember, observeth, that before the flood we read of no idolatry. Aquinas addeth a reason to the observation, because the memory of the creation was then fresh in their thoughts. Again, look upon God in Christ: you heard before, in Lev.

xvii., if they did not bring their sacrifice to the tabernacle, it was called a sacrifice of devils. The tabernacle was a type of Christ. You make God an idol when you worship him out of Christ, for the Father will be honoured in the Son, John v. Therefore, whenever you go to God, take Christ along with you.

Secondly, From setting up any idol against God in your affections. When you set up anything above God in your esteem, especially in your trust, that is an idol. Covetousness is twice called idolatry, Col. iii. 5, Eph. v. 5, because it doth withdraw our affections from God; yea, our care, our esteem, our trust, which is the chiefest homage and respect which God expecteth from the creature. I mention these things because I would speak somewhat to practice, and because Satan is gratified with spiritual idolatry, as well as with that which is gross and bodily.

Obs. 6. From that clause, about the body of Moses, once more observe, that of all kinds of idolatry, the devil abuseth the world most with idolatrous respects to the bodies and relics of dead saints. If you ask why, I answer--Partly because this kind of idolatry is most likely to take, as being the most plausible and suitable to that reverent esteem which we have of those that are departed in the Lord; and so our religious affections become a snare to us: partly because when men become objects of worship and adoration, the Godhead is made more contemptible, and men's conceits of a divine power run at a lower rate every day: partly because this malicious fiend hopeth this way to beat the Lord with his own weapon, when the bodies and relics of those saints who, by the famousness of their examples, were likely to draw many to God, do as much, or more, withdraw men from him, and superstition doth as much hurt as their example did good: partly because the devil, by long experience, hath found this to be a successful way in the world. Lactantius proveth it, that the idolising

of famous men was the rise of all idolatry; and Tertullian, in the end of his Apology, observeth the same, that heathen idolatry came in this way: sub nominibus et imaginibus mortuorum--by a reverence to the images of dead men whose memory was precious amongst them. Ninus, or Nimrod, the first idolater, set up his own dead father, Belus; whence came the names of Baal and Bel for an idol. The teraphim, stolen by Rachel, Gen. xxxi. 35, were the images of their ancestors, whom Laban worshipped. So in the primitive times, before any other idolatry was brought into the church, they began with the tombs and shrines of the martyrs.

Use 1. First, It showeth us the first rise of idolatry, respect to the relics and remains of some men famous in their generations. Satan attempted it betimes, not only among the heathens, but among the people of God; he contended for the body of Moses, that he might set it up for this use; but that which he could not obtain then he hath effected now in the Roman synagogue, by the arms, the legs, the hands, the feet, the pictures of the martyrs. Surely such a known artifice and ancient method of deceit, a man would think, should long ere this have been discerned, but that God hath given them up to believe a lie.' Well might the antichristian state be called, Rev. xi. 8, Babylon, Sodom, and Egypt;' that is, Babylon for idolatry, Sodom for filthiness, and Egypt for ignorance and darkness; the same idolatry being practised which was in use in the darkest times of paganism. Heathenism and Popery differ but little, only the names are changed, a new saint for an old heathen idol; their canonising and the heathens' apothe'osis are much alike; so are their saints and the heathens' heroes and middle powers: only that the Papists have put many in the calendar which either never were in the world, or else were wicked and traitorous; as our Becket, and St George, an Arian bishop, that so the devil might be

doubly gratified--by the shrine itself, and that, by the canonisation of the infamous person, sin might become less odious.

Secondly, It showeth the perverseness of men, who are apt superstitiously to regard the relics of them dead whom they despised living. Moses was often opposed living, and after death likely to be adored; as it is often the condition of God's people to live hated and die sainted. Vetus morbus est, saith Salvian, quo mortui sancti coluntur, vivi contemnuntur. The Scribes and Pharisees garnished the tombs of the dead prophets, and killed the living,' Mat. xxiii. 29, 30; and the Jews, in the 5th of John, pretended love to Moses, and showed hatred to Christ. Posterity honoureth them whom former ages destroyed; living saints are an eyesore; they torment the world, either by their example or their reproofs, Rev. xi. 10, Heb. xi. 7; but objects out of sight do not exasperate and stand in the way of our lusts. This fond affection is little worth; those that were ready to adore Moses would not imitate him.

Obs. 7. Again from that he durst not, ouk etolmese, he had not the boldness to do anything contrary to the law of God, or unbeseeming his rank and ministry. Note, that sin is a hold contest, or a daring of God. Every sin is an affront to the law that forbiddeth it: 2 Sam. xii. 9, Wherefore hast thou sinned in despising the commandment?' A sinner doth in effect say, What care I for the commandment? I will go on for all that; but a godly man feareth the commandment,' Prov. xiii. 13. If a law of God standeth in his way, he durst not go forward; he feareth more to break a law than to meet with the devil in all his ruff, or any opposition from the world; this is a holy timorousness: whereas, on the contrary, no such boldness as in sinning; it is not only a despising of the law, but a contest with God himself: 1 Cor. x. 22, Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?' Will you enter into the

lists with God, as if you could make your part good against him? Ezek. xxii. 14. He that sins against light and conscience, he biddeth open defiance to the majesty of God, and his lust and God's will do contend for the mastery. Let this make us afraid of sin, it is a daring attempt of the creature against his maker, a challenging of God to the combat. Well might the apostle say that the carnal mind is e'chthra, enmity against God.' Rom. viii. 7. Therefore, when you are tempted, consider, What am I now a-doing? Shall I challenge the combat of my maker? draw omnipotency about my ears? An angel durst not: How can I do this wickedness and sin against God?' Gen. xxxix. 9. Again, it informeth us what is the proper remedy against sin--a holy awe and fear; therefore, the first and chiefest point of true wisdom is made to be the fear of God,' Prov. ix. 10; so Prov. xiv. 27, this keepeth the soul from daring. Job's eschewing evil is ascribed to his fearing God, Job i. 1. There are two grounds of this fear--God's power and goodness.

1. God's power. Shall we contend with him who can command legions? Surely he will always overcome when he judgeth.' Rom. iii. 4, and have the best of it at last; and so. this sin will be my ruin. There is a difference between striving with him in a sinful, and wrestling with him in a gracious way; there God will be overcome by his own strength: Command ye me,' &c., Isa. xlv. 11; but when you have the confidence to contest with him in a sinful way, what will become of you? Ps. lxxvi. 7, Thou, even thou, art to be feared; and who can stand in thy wrath when thou art angry?' Man may make his part good against man, but who can cope with the Lord himself?

2. God's love and mercy; that should beget a fear, or an un willingness to displease God: Hosea iii. 5, They shall fear the Lord and his goodness;' not only abstain from sin (as a dog from the bait, for fear of a cudgel) out of bondage or servile fear, but out of a holy,

childlike affection to God, and so do not only forbear sin, but abhor it. It is base and servile when we are moved with no other respects but our own danger. There is a holy fear, which ariseth from grace, and partly of nature: an archangel durst not, that is, the holiness of his nature would not permit him. There is a holy reverent fear, by which we fear to offend our good God as the greatest evil in the world; and it ariseth partly from the new nature, and partly from thankfulness to God, because of his mercy in Jesus Christ.

I have done with this note when I have told you that boldness in sinning resembleth the devil, but a holy fear resembleth Michael. It is devil-like to adventure upon sin without fear and shame. Satan had the impudency to seek to defeat the Lord's purpose of burying the body of Moses, but the good angel, in opposing him, durst not bring a railing accusation.' Certainly they that fear neither God nor man,' Luke xviii. 7, have outgrown the heart of a man, and are next to the devils. Many account it a praise to themselves when they are bold to engage in villanous actions and attempts. Oh! to be presumptuous and self-willed is the worst character that can be given to a man, 2 Peter iii. 10; a stubborn boldness argueth a seared conscience.

Obs. 8. Once more from that, ouk eto'lmese, he durst not; that the angels are of a most holy nature, which will not permit them to sin: therefore they are called holy angels,' Mat. xxv. 31, and the devils unclean spirits.' In their apparitions they usually came in a garb that represented their innocency; as at Christ's sepulchre there were two angels in white, the one at head, the other at feet, where Jesus had lain,' John xx. 12 So to Daniel: chap. x. 5, one appeared, having his loins girt with fine gold of Uphaz,' with long white robes; gold, to show his majesty; in white robes, as an emblem of purity and holiness: see Acts x. 30. Now this holiness they have partly by the gift of God

in their creation. God made them so at the first, which may beget a hope in us men; the same God must sanctify us that made the holy angels: surely he can wash us, though never so filthy, and make us whiter than snow,' Ps. li. 7. Partly by the merit of Christ, which reached to things in heaven as well as in earth, Col. i. 20, Eph. i. 10. If those places be not cogent, but be thought to intend the glorified saints, yet because they are called elect angels,' 1 Tim. v. 21, and all election is carried on in and by Christ, Eph. i. 4, it seemeth probable at least that they have benefit by him; yea, Heb. xii. 22, 23, they are made a part of that general assembly' of which Christ is the head, and so by consequence they are members of the redeemed society; which should encourage us the more to come to Christ. Angels have much of their whiteness from being washed in Christ's blood; they are preserved in Jesus Christ as well as we, and have their confirmation from him, or else they had fallen with the other apostate spirits.

Again, this holiness is the more increased and augmented:--

1. By their constant communion with God, for their always beholding his face must needs beget the more holy awe and reverence: Michael durst not, &c. It is a great advantage to holiness to set God before our eyes, and to foresee him in all our ways: Ps. xviii. 23, I was upright before thee;' that is, the thought of his being before God made him more sincere: He that doth evil hath not seen God,' 3 John 11; that is, hath no acquaintance with him: the good angels, being so near the chiefest good, are at the greater distance from evil.

2. By their continual obedience: They do his commandments, hearkening to the voice of his word,' Ps. ciii. 20. Exercise perfecteth and strengtheneth every habit. The angels, the more they do the will of God, the more they hate what is contrary to his will. The evil angels

grow worse by frequent acts of spite and malice, and the good, angels better by frequent acts of duty. For the first, see 1 John iii. 8, The devil sinneth from the beginning.' Satan is still a-sinning, and his whole life a continued act of apostasy. So the good angels are always doing;' they rest not day and night,' Rev. iv. 8. Surely it will be a matter of great advantage to exercise ourselves unto godliness,' the greater will be our hatred of sin, and delight in obedience; as on the other side the exercising of the heart unto sin doth much strengthen and increase it, 2 Peter ii. 14. In heaven, where there is continual duty, there is no sin.

Use 1. Let us apply it now.

First, It serveth to humble us. We are the next rank of reasonable creatures, but how do we differ from them? Their natures engage them to holiness, and ours, being corrupted, engage us to sin; their nature will not permit them to sin, and our nature will not permit us to do that which is good, Rom. vii. 21. And yet the angels are ashamed of this their nature; they cover their faces when they behold God's: Job xv. 14, 15, What is man, that he should be clean? and he that is born of a woman, that he should be righteous? Behold, he putteth no trust in his saints; yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight.' These holy angels, when they compare themselves with God, are abased; and should not we much more? See also Job iv. 19.

Secondly, It serveth to stir us up to holiness. You will say, Where lieth the motive? I answer:--

1. We are bound as well as they. They behold his face,' and we behold his face in a glass;' we are under a law as well as they, yea, commanded to observe their pattern: Mat. vi. 10, Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.' The examples of the saints on earth are no fit copy for us to write after, for there we shall find many of the

letters set awry. In their lives corruption is more visible than grace. Therefore Christ giveth us a copy from heaven, that we might aim at the holiness and perfection of the angels. It is but equal that we, who expect to be like the angels' in glory, Luke xx. 36, isa'ngeloi, should be like them in grace now. Many would strive to be as angels for gifts and parts, but not for holiness, for exact purity and cheerfulness and readiness in service, which yet are the things propounded to our imitation. The devil retaineth cunning since his apostasy. To be wise to do evil is to be like the bad angels, not the good. If you would not be cast out with them hereafter, you should not take their copy and example for imitation, but that of the holy angels.

2. We are bound more than they, as being of an inferior rank; and acts of submission and obedience do chiefly oblige inferiors. The angels themselves are inferior to God; but dwellers in houses of clay' much more. That passage of the psalmist is emphatical, Ps. ciii. 20, The angels, that excel in strength, do his commandments.' Shall the peasant scorn that work in which the prince himself is engaged? If the glorious mighty angels durst not sin against God, we should not much more. When John would have worshipped the angel, he saith, Rev. xxii. 9, See thou do it not, for I am thy fellow-servant.' Ah! who would decline the work when an angel is our fellow-servant? When these mighty spirits put their necks to the work of the Lord, shall sorry man be excused?

3. We are the more bound for their sakes, because of their tutelage, They are present with. us. We are awed by a man of gravity, much more should we be by the presence of an angel. When Cato was upon the stage, they durst not call for their obscene sports. There is an angel always by you. What reports, think you, will they carry to Christ, if they should see anything that is unseemly? 1 Tim. v. 21, I charge you before God, and our Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels,' fec. The holy

angels are, as it were, the spies and intelligencers of heaven, and do acquaint Christ, not only with our miseries, but our sins. God's omnipresency is a great depth, we cannot fathom it with our thoughts, and therefore it worketh but little with us. The nearer things come to the manner of our presence, the more do they affect us. Consider the angels are present with you in the room where, it may be, you are acting your privy wickedness.

Again, we had need be holy, the rather for the angels' sake, because else we shall lose their tutelage. They care not to take notice of an impure, obstinate sinner: Ps. xxxiv. 7, The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him.' They that fear God themselves delight most in them that do likewise. Suitableness of spirit and life breedeth a holy and sweet familiarity between us. They delight to keep us, and go with us here, that they may lay a foundation for a more familiar acquaintance in heaven. Now, shall we grieve such blessed companions? When Balaam went to curse the people of God, a good angel resisteth him, Num. xxii. 22. If an angel stood in the way of a sorcerer, much more do they seek to stop and prevent the miscarriages and offences of God's children. Will you break forth or go on violently when an angel standeth in the way, and leave their tutelage for a lust? They are holy, and disallow all carnal enterprises, and would withstand the execution of them. Will you constrain them to forsake you? You know how it sped with Josiah, when he would not turn his face, but go out without the defence of God and his angels. See 2 Chron. xxxv. 22; he was wounded in the battle, and goeth home and dieth.

Thirdly, It teacheth us to be more awe-full; all fear is not slavish. The angels, that have a pure nature, are afraid to sin; we have a mixed nature: corruption is already gotten into our souls, and therefore have more need of caution; as they that have an enemy without and a

treacherous party within have need to watch and ward. Fear is all the remedy left us; we cannot stop the flux of natural corruption, but we may withstand a natural temptation. As the angels resist the admission of sin, so let us withstand the increase and propagation of it; we are always in the presence of God, and shall we affront him to his face? Fear keepeth the angels pure and us holy, them from the admission of sin, and us from the commission of it: so Solomon saith, Blessed is he that feareth always,' Prov. xxviii. 14; that is, not that perplexeth himself with needless terrors and scruples; that were a torture, not a blessedness; that is the devils' fear, who believe and tremble.' But when we are always cautious, out of a deep respect to God, that we dare not offend him at any time, this is a blessed fear, like the good angels' fear; as Michael here durst not bring a railing accusation.'

Obs. 9. The next point is from that a railing accusation. In the original it is krisin blasphemias, the judgment or sentence of blasphemy, or evil-speaking.' The meaning is, such unworthy language as would not become any serious judgment or process; and because the angel was a party, not a judge, we translate it not a railing judgment, but a railing accusation. Thence observe, that to the worst adversary in the best cause, railing and reviling must not be used: Michael, when contending with the devil about the body of Moses,' &c. The reasons are:--

1. Because such reproaches come from an evil principle, contempt or passion, both of which argue pride. One that over-valueth himself disdaineth others; and stormeth when he is crossed, as a full stream roareth and swelleth when it meeteth with a dam and obstruction.

2. Such reproaches are most unsuitable to matters of religion. The God of peace will not be served with a wrathful spirit, and Christ's warfare needeth no carnal weapons. Christianity of all religions is the

meekest and most humble; the foundation of it is the Lamb slain, and the consignation and sealing of it is by the Spirit, who descended in the form of a dove, both emblems of a modest humility; and should a meek religion be defended by the violence and fury of our passions? Cursing doth ill become them that are called to inherit a blessing,' 1 Peter iii. 9.

3. They are flatly against the word. The scripture is a great friend to the peace of human societies, for it condemneth the least offensive word and gesture: Isa. lviii. 9, Thou shalt put away from thee the yoke, and the putting forth of the finger;' a gesture of indignation, and therefore God would have it laid aside, even the putting forth of the finger, as well as the yoke broken. So see Mat. v. 22, But I say unto you, Whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, is in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say unto his brother, Raca, is in danger of the council: and whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell-fire.' The Scribes and Pharisees had restrained the sixth commandment to the gross act of murder; Christ telleth them that rash anger, with all the expressions of it, is murder. His expressions allude to the courts of the Jews; three there were specially among them--the lowest, the middle, and the highest. Their lowest judicatory was of three men, who took cognisance of lighter matters, as injuries and strifes about goods, and things of a pecuniary concernment; this court was set up in lesser towns that had few in habitants. The second court was of three and twenty men, before whom the weightiest causes were brought: concerning the life of a man, all capital crimes, or if an ox had gored a man or woman, or in case of any abominable commixtion with a beast, if a woman approached to a beast, &c., Lev. xx. 16. This court was set up in all the cities of Palestine, and was called the lesser Sanhedrim; and because Jerusalem was the head

city, the seat of the prince and temple was there, therefore, in that city were two of these lesser Sanhedrims: the lower sate in the Gate of the Mountain, that is, that gate which gave en trance to the mountain of the temple; the other, being the higher, sate in the Gate of Ezra, near the porch of the temple. The third judicatory was the greater Sanhedrim, which consisted of severity men, in imitation of the counsel of God to Moses, Num. xi. 16. This was the highest judicatory, from whence there was no appeal, as there might be from the lower courts to this. Into this assembly were chosen such as did excel others for nobility and wisdom, and that by a solemn laying on of hands; strangers or unclean persons or common people might not come nigh unto them. To this tribunal were referred all doubtful matters too hard for inferior courts to decide, Deut. xvii. 8, 9, as also all things that did belong to the twelve tribes, or to the whole nation; all things that concerned the high priest, matters of war and peace, the false prophet, fec. Therefore Christ saith, Luke xiii. 33, It can not be that a prophet should perish out of Jerusalem,' that being the city where the Sanhedrim sate. By this court was Christ condemned, and the apostles, Acts iv. 5; and Stephen, chap. vii. 7; and Paul, chap, xxiii. 1. They sate in a part of the temple called Gasith; their punishments were strangling, beheading, stoning, burning; those that were condemned to be burned were burnt in the Valley of Hinnom; and in great cases, besides his corporal death, the malefactor was appointed and accursed to the judgment of hell. Let me apply all to the present case. Christ doth not meddle with the lowest court, the judgment of three men, because capital matters did not belong to their cognisance, and his intent is to show what a capital matter the least expression of anger is: Whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause,' saith he, is in danger of judgment;' that is, of the judgment of twenty-three men,

to show that rash anger is before God a capital matter. And whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca'--thou vain and witless fellow; this was the lowest kind of contumely then in use; some make it only an interjection of indignation--is in danger of the council;' that is, of the Sanhedrim, which noteth, that anger expressed, though in the lowest way, is a higher fault than single and bare anger, as the fault was greater for which they appeared before the higher Sanhedrim than that for which they appeared be fore the twenty-three judges. But whosoever shall say, Thou fool'--this noteth a higher contempt, as implying a charge, not only of weakness of nature, but of sin and wickedness,--he is in danger of hell-fire,' which was the highest judgment of the Sanhedrim, to burn them in the Valley of Hinnom, and to leave them accursed till the Lord come; and so proportionably it noteth the greatness of the crime which is committed in slandering and reproaching our brethren. It is a most odious sin before God; for, in allusion to man's judgment, he showeth, that though there be degrees in the sin, and will be in the punishment, yet the whole kind is very displeasing to the Lord.

4. Because reproaches have an influence, and do exasperate rather than convince. The dog that followeth the game with barking and bawling loseth the prey; and there is not a more likely way to under mine the truth than an unseemly defence of it. Satan is mightily gratified, if men had eyes to see it, with the ill-managing of God's cause.

Use 1. First, It serveth for information, to show us the vanity of those excuses by which men would disguise their wrath and passion. What! will you plead, I am in the right way, it is God's cause?

Ans. Passion is blind, and cannot judge: James i. 20, The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.' The wrong way may be usually descried by the excesses and violences of those that are engaged in it.

If we be in the right, extremities and furies of passion are not lawful; our religious affections may overset us. When religion, which should limit us, is made a party to engage them, it is hard to keep bounds. A stone, the higher the place from whence it falleth, giveth the more dangerous blow; so the higher the matter about which we contend, usually our anger falleth with the more violence, and is the more unmortified, because of the pretence of zeal. If the erring parties offend through ignorance, remember a bone out of joint must be settled again with a gentle hand, Gal. vi. 1. Are the opposite stubborn? In meekness instruct those that oppose themselves,' 2 Tim. ii. 25; when their absurd opposing is apt to tempt us to rage, passion, and reproach, we must contain ourselves; the hasty disciples knew not what spirit they were of.'

Do they provoke, revile, wrong us first?

Ans. The railing and ill-dealing of another doth not dissolve the bond of our duty to God; to return injury for injury is but to act over their sin; it was bad in them, and it is worse in us; for he that sinneth by example sinneth doubly, as having had experience of the odiousness of it in another--qui malum imitatur, bonus esse non potest. Revenge and injury differ only in order of time; the one is first, the other second in the fault; and it was no excuse to Adam that he was not first in the transgression.' Christianity teacheth us a rare way of overcoming injuries, not only by patience, but doing good to those that wrong us: Rom. xii. 17, and 1 Peter iii. 9, Bender not reviling for reviling, but, contrariwise, blessing.' We have for our pattern Christ, who being reviled, reviled not again,' 1 Peter ii. 23, And herein he was imitated by his disciples, 1 Cor. iv. 13, blasphemou'menoi parakaloumen, being defamed, we intreat'--a motto which I would have prefixed to all rejoinders or replies to a virulent opposition.

Calvin's modesty concerning Luther is notable: Etiamsi me, diabolum vocarit, eum tamen insignem Dei servum agnoscam--though he should call me devil, yet God forbid but I should account him an eminent servant of Christ. It was once an argument for the truth of our religion that the scriptures contained a doctrine that could not be of men, as forbidding revenge, which is so sweet to nature, and commanding us to do good to them that hate us.

But shall I suffer myself, and in me the cause of Christ, to be trampled upon?

Ans. You are allowed a modest vindication of the truth and your own innocency: Prov. xxvi. 4, 5, Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou be like him. Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit.' You will say, Here is hot and cold in one breath. I answer--Solomon speaketh of a scoffing, railing fool; and the meaning is,--do not imitate him in his foolish passion. This were to be evil because he is so; and it is against reason, that because I am sensible of indecent carriage in him, therefore I should allow it in myself; but yet answer him,--that is to the purpose, and with solid reason beat down his presumption and ignorance with a meek but a strong reply, such as may check his pride, but not imitate his folly. It is observable, when it was said of Christ, John viii. 48, 49, Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil,' he answered not a word to the personal reproach; but where his commission was touched, to that he replieth, saying, I have not a devil, but I honour my father.' It is but weakness of mind, or strength of passion, to regard personal invectives. In short, we may answer, but not with harsh and contumelious language.

Use. 2. Secondly, Here is a direction to public persons, and those that can handle the pen of the writer. Passion is apt to taint our religious defences; but check it. Michael durst not bring a railing accusation;'

leave all unhandsomeness of prosecution to them that defend an evil cause: The servant of God must be gentle and patient,' 2 Tim. ii. 24. Opprobrious language doth but darken a just quarrel and contention. But you will say, May we not reprove the sins of men, and that somewhat sharply? I answer--Yea, it is lawful, as appeareth both by the practice of the prophets and angels, yea, of Christ himself, and also by the precepts of the word. Paul saith, Titus i. 7, that a bishop must not be self-willed, and soon angry;' and yet (ver. 13) he biddeth him elenchein apo'tomos, to rebuke some gainsayers sharply. There is a great deal of difference between railing and a reproof. A sermon without some warmth and keenness in it is but like a cold ration; men that speak from their brain will speak coldly, because they only declaim against things for fashion's sake, without any sense or touch upon their hearts; an affectionate pleading for Christ is like strong water, whereas a formal narration is but like river water, without any strength and vigour. They that love Christ will be zealous for his truths and ordinances, and zeal cannot deliver itself without some smartness and earnestness; but a cold indifferency is more tame and flat. But then this must be done with great caution; you had need look to your spirits. Partly because Satan loveth to corrupt a religious affection; partly because, in these businesses, God is not only engaged, but ourselves; and many times the savour of the main river is lost when it is mingled with other streams; too, too often do we begin in the spirit and end in the flesh. The cautions which I shall give respect--(1.) The object, or cause; (2.) The persons; (3.) Manner; (4.) Principle; (5.) End.

1. The cause must be regarded, that it be real and weighty: weighty it must be; it is preposterous to be all of a fire about question able truths and matters of a less regard. The flaming sword was set about

paradise. And real it must be; the sin we reprove must be manifest, and the faults we charge apparent: Mat. v. 22, If any be angry with his brother without a cause,' &c. Otherwise Christ and his apostles called Raca, Mat. xxiii. 17, O fools and blind;' and Luke xxiv. 25, O fools and slow of heart to believe,' &c.; and Gal. iii. 1, O foolish Galatians;' and James ii. 20, O vain man,' &c. But in all these cases there was a cause. False and rash imputations are but railing; zeal being a fierce and strong passion, you must not let it fly upon the throat of anything but what is certainly evil.

2. The persons must be considered; weak sinners are to be distinguished from the malicious, and the tractable from the obstinate. God's tender lambs, though straying, must be gently reduced;' put a difference,' saith our apostle, ver. 19. Ad evangelizandum, non maledicendum, missus es, said OEcolampadius to Farel, who was a good man, but a little too violent--Thou wert not sent to revile, but to preach the gospel. But on the other side, there is a difference to be used in the case of hypocrites, that gain by that repute and esteem which they have. Christ himself inveighed against the Pharisees, asperrimis verbis, in the roughest ways: Mat. xxiii., Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites,' &c. We may pluck off the disguise from a hypocrite, especially when they seduce and deceive the miserable multitude by an opinion of holiness. The Pharisees and Sadducees, to keep up their repute, submitted to John's baptism, but doth he treat them gently? No; Mat. iii. 7, O generation of vipers,' &c. So Paul to Elymas the sorcerer, Acts xiii., O thou full of all subtlety and mischief, thou child of the devil, and enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the holy ways of the Lord?' In these cases there is a regard had to others, that they may not perish by too good an opinion of such deceivers; and here that of Solomon is of regard, Prov. xxviii. 4, They

that forsake the law, praise the wicked; and they that keep the law, set themselves against them;' a vigorous opposition doth better here than a cold dislike.

3. For the manner. With our zeal we should still manifest love and compassion; and our way of dealing must rather be rational than passionate. There is a holy contemperation of zeal and meekness if we could hit upon it; the same Spirit that appeared in cloven tongues of fire appeared also in the form of a dove. The work of righteousness' may be sown in peace,' James iii. 18. The church's garden thriveth by the cool gales of the north wind, as well as the sultry heat of the south, Cant. iv. 16; God's cause should neither be neglected nor disparaged by an indiscreet carriage.

4. Concerning the principle; see that it be good; it must not be zeal for our private concernments, but for the glory of God; not a strange fire, but a holy fire. Moses was the meekest man upon earth in his own cause: Num. xii. 3, When Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses, the man Moses was meek above all men of the earth.' When our zealous contests come from a heart bleeding for God's dishonour, from hatred of sin, a fear of the public, then they are right. Lot was vexed not with Sodom's injuries, but Sodom's filthiness, 2 Peter ii. 8. When love of our neighbour, desire of his amendment, we are loath to suffer sin upon him, puts us upon this earnestness, our heart is upright with God; but when we seek to disgrace the men rather than condemn the sins, and we rage most upon the hazard of our own interest, and can be earnest against some sins and errors, and comply with worse, it is not zeal for God, but for a party.

5. Great regard must be had to the end. A reproof aimeth at the conviction or conversion of a sinner, but censure at his disgrace and confusion. Our aim must be as right as our passion is strong; what ever

we do must not be done out of a spirit of ostentation and popularity, or to keep up a devotion to our own interests. John Baptist sharply reproved the Pharisees, not when contemning his person, but when coming to his baptism.

Obs. 10. There remaineth nothing of the 9th verse to be discussed but the last clause, the Lord rebuke thee. Though Michael doth not rail, yet he referreth the matter to God, Whence observe, that in religious contests we must carry on the opposition, though not in an unseemly manner. Michael doth not let Satan alone, so we must not let errors alone, and the devil carry it clearly without rub or opposition. Many, under a pretence of meekness, are still and silent in the cause of Christ. Cursed is this peace and meekness, when we let the envious man sow his tares, and we never give warning. God's messengers are compared to watchful dogs; when the wolf cometh we must bark; if the sleepy world be troubled at it we must bear their reproach.

Obs. 11. Again, he referreth it to God, who is the fittest patron of his own causes. In our contests about religion, God must especially be sought unto for a blessing. Michael contended, bat said, The Lord rebuke thee; disputing times should also be praying times. Prejudices will never vanish till God send out his light and truth,' Ps. xliii. 3; and if the devil be not prayed down, as well as disputed down, little good cometh of our contests.

[135] Qu. censure'?--ED.

[136] John's disciples are called a'ngeloi, angels, or messengers of John, Luke vii. 24.

[137] See Rivet's Cathol. Orthodox, de Ang. Grad.

Ver. 10. But these speak evil of the things which they know not; but,

what they knoiu naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves.

In this verse he showeth the disproportion between them and the archangel; he was modest in a known good cause, but these are contemptuous, and given to railing in matters of which they are wholly ignorant. Two faults are charged upon them in this verse:--(1.) Pride, in condemning things without knowledge; (2.) Wickedness, in abusing the knowledge they had.

But these, ou'toi, the seducers spoken of in the context, speak evil, blasphemousi, take liberty to belch out their reproaches of the things they know not. What are those things? Some say, the dignities before spoken of; others, the mysteries of the Christian faith. For the former opinion, that clause may be alleged, ver 8, ta`s doxas blasphemountas, speaking evil of dignities;' and so it will imply that they were ignorant of the nature of angels, with whom they pretended so great a familiarity as to know their courses, services, conjugations; [138] or else of the nature of church ordinances, they taking upon them to speak so reproachfully of the offices which God hath set in the church; or of the nature of civil power and magistracy, they allowing themselves in such intemperate language. But for the latter opinion, the universal particle in the text, o'sa me`n ouk oi'dasi, Whatsoever things they know not;' so Peter's phrase is general, 2 Peter ii. 12, But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things they understand not.' The scope of both these apostles being to set out these deceivers as ignorant and brutish sensualists, and yet under a pretence of great and more curious knowledge than others had,

wherefore they were called Gnostics. For my part, I shall interpret the clause generally of their ignorance in all truly spiritual matters, which was bewrayed in that they did deliver their sense in matter of magistracy and church ministries with some impudence and reproach. But what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves. Before I come more particularly to open the words, let me tell you there is some difference about that clause, as brute beasts; to what part of the sentence is it to be referred? if to the former part, thus, what they know naturally as brute beasts, then the sense will be that knowledge which they have in common with the beasts. Man is in part an angel, in part a beast; in his reason and upper part of the soul he resembleth an angel, and in his appetite and senses a beast. What they know by their senses and brutish desires, that will be the sense, if you allow of this first reference. If to the latter part, thus, in those things as brute beasts they corrupt themselves, then it will suit with the parallel place in Peter, 2 Peter ii. 12, os a'loga zoa phusika`, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed;' and it will imply that they degenerated into beasts, notwithstanding that natural knowledge wherewith they were endowed. But to speak my own thoughts in this matter; the former reading is more agreeable to the posture of the words in the original, o'sa de phusikos os a'loga zoa epi'stantai, what they naturally as brute beasts know,' in those things they are worse than beasts, corrupting and defiling themselves by the excesses of the sensual appetite: as in eating and drinking, and the use of the woman in common copulation, as if there were no law, nor limited use of those things, which yet they might discern in the beasts themselves, and the dictates of their own consciences.

This being premised, I come to explain the words. What they know, phusikos, naturally. There is a threefold light:--(1.) Sense or

instinct; (2.) Reason; (3.) Grace; and accordingly as a man is furnished he may be said to be pneuma'tikos, spiritual, or furnished with the light of grace, or psuchiko`s, which we translate natural, 1 Cor. ii. 14,--it signifieth one that hath nothing but the light of a reasonable soul. Lastly, phusiko`s, merely natural, which signifieth one guided by the blind motion and instinct of nature, without reason, counsel and choice, as the beasts are. So it is said here, what they know naturally,' that is, what they understand by natural inclination, or the mere judgment or perception of sense, to be good or evil, in those things they corrupt themselves, phthei'rontai, are corrupted. So Erasmus; but the word is not simply passive, but after the form of the conjugation Hithpael among the Hebrews, which infert passionem in se, it implieth such a passion as we cause to ourselves. But how do they corrupt themselves? sinfully or penally? I answer--Both ways; sinfully they corrupt and defile themselves, and so draw down punishments both upon their souls and bodies, 2 Peter ii. 12, They shall perish in their own corruption.'

Obs. 1. Having made this way, I come to the observations; and in the first place observe, that truth is usually slandered out of ignorance; because men do not understand the ways and things of God, therefore they do condemn them. In the apostles' days, the doctrine of the cross' was accounted foolishness' by those that knew least of it; and afterwards the Christian religion was condemned because it could not be heard; Simul ac desinunt ignorare, desinunt odisse, so Tertullian in Apologia--when they knew it, they could not hate it. It is the devil's cunning to keep us at a distance from truths, and therefore burdeneth them with prejudices, that we may suspect rather than search, and condemn that out of ignorance and upon vulgar clamour which upon knowledge we could not choose but love and profess; and it is man's

perverseness and pride to speak evil of things above his reach, and to disprove that which he has not attained unto or cannot understand. Nazianzen speaks of some ignorant people that condemned learning, because they had not the happiness to attain to it; i'na to` kat' autou`s kru'ptetai, saith he, Orat. xx.; that their own deficiency being the more common, might be less odious; or to instance in a higher case, Papists and carnal men scoff at imputed righteousness, assurance of salvation, and the testimony of the Spirit, because they are things they are utterly unacquainted with. Well, then, when we declaim against things, we should speak out of advised knowledge, not rash zeal. See John iii. 11, We speak that which we know, and testify that which we have seen:' zeal, as it must have a right aim, so a solid ground to proceed upon. It is a vain thing to begin at the affections, and to hate before we know: Prov. xviii. 13, He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is a folly and shame to him.' If you light right, it is but a happy mistake and stumble: Quid iniquius quam ut oderint homines quod ignorant, etiamsi res meretur odium--Tertul. ut supra. When the affections outstart the judgment, men grow obstinate in their ignorance, and will not know what they have a mind to hate: Malunt nescire quia jam oderunt, as Tertullian goeth on. Bash prejudices engaging men in opposition, they will not own the truth when represented to them; having hated it without knowledge, they hate it against knowledge, and so are hardened against the ways of God, which is the case of many who in a blind zeal have appeared against the public ministry and ordinances; and being engaged, are loath to strike sail, and lay down their defiance, when sufficient conviction is offered.

Obs. 2. Observe again, blockish and stupid men are most bold in reproaching. A fool's wrath falleth very heavy, because it falleth with

all its weight, there being nothing to restrain and stop it: Prov. xxvii. 3, A stone is heavy, and sand is weighty, but a fool's wrath is heavier than them both.' When the mind is void of judgment, it is more overcome and carried out in the way of a naughty passion. Usually we find it, the weakest spirits are most violent, there being nothing of judgment to counterbalance affection; men are all flame and rage. Liquors, when they run low and are upon the dregs, they grow more tart and sour; so it is usually with the dregs of men, for when they are weak and run in low parts, their opposition is most troublesome. What ado in the ministry have we with young heady professors, that have more heat than light! and how troublesome are those wild sectaries, that have only knowledge enough to prate a little against the undoubted ordinances of Jesus Christ! for there being nothing of knowledge and civility to restrain them, they easily give vent to the excesses of their passion, by clamour and evil-speaking.

Obs. 3. From the second part of the charge, observe, that men of corrupt minds are usually sensual, and sensual men are usually men of corrupt minds; an unsound heart is best sheltered under unsound doctrine, and carnal delights blunt and weaken the edge and intension of the mind, so that they are very liable to mistakes. Therefore, on the one side, we should labour to keep the mind right and sound in the faith; fish stink first at the head; when the judgment is poisoned, the taint is soon conveyed to the affections. On the other side, add to your knowledge temperance,' 2 Peter i. 6. The apostle joineth these, because many times men of the greatest parts are overcome by appetite; and some say that temper of body which is fit for wit and scholarship is much inclined this way. Solomon, so famous for wisdom and knowledge, was enticed by women. Oh! let not fleshy lusts betray you. That is the best knowledge that endeth in temperance, or begets a holy moderation

in the use of sensual pleasure; if we can not govern our affections, we know nothing as we ought to know;' nay, otherwise, your knowledge will be corrupted by your affections: many errors take their rise and beginning from evil manners and filthy lusts.

Obs. 4. Observe again, that wicked men, left to themselves, do but abuse and corrupt that natural goodness and knowledge which they have in them. Natural abilities are soon depraved with evil habits. He that had but one talent is called a wicked and slothful servant,' Mat. xxv. 26; slothful for not growing better, and wicked for growing worse. Naturally we are blind, and we cannot endure to be enlightened, 2 Peter iii. 5. Yea, rather, we put the finger in nature's eye, and then there cometh on judicial blindness, Rom. i. 28; we suffer lusts to blow out the candle of reason, and then we are justly left to the power of vile affections. Certainly they do not flatter us that say there is a power in nature as to conversion and turning to God. We are so far from improving ourselves, that we corrupt ourselves in what we know naturally,' and suffer brutish lusts to blind the mind and harden the heart.

Obs. 5. Once more observe, sin where it reigneth turneth a man into a brute beast: Ps. xlix. 12, Man being in honour, abideth not; he is like the beasts that perish:' the meaning is, he abode not in the honour of his creation; hence compared to wolves for their cruelty, dogs for their filthiness, to horses and mules for the rage of lust, to a wild ass's colt for wildness and dulness of understanding; see Jer. v. 8, Ezek. xx. 23, Job xi. 12, Rev. xxii. 15. You may see here to what sin will bring you; with Nebuchadnezzar we outgrow the heart of a man; what he did through that deep melancholy that fell upon him by God's judgment, Dan. iv. 32, we do spiritually. If we had the head of a horse, or the face of a swine, or the hoofs of an ass, how should we be

looked upon as monsters: but to have the hearts of the beasts is worse; to be like them in the inward man is more monstrous in the sight of God. Consider this, sin maketh a beast of you; nay, it maketh you worse than the beasts: The ass knoweth his owner,' &c., Isa. i. 3; they are serviceable to their benefactors, but thou art a rebel against God that made thee, and hath kept thee all thy days. The sluggard is put to school to the ant, Prov. vi. The beasts know their stint and measure; a horse or a dog will not be drunk, &c. Shall I speak one word more? Sin doth not only make a beast of you, but a devil of you: John vi. 70, One of you is a devil;' the devils said, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou son of David?' and wicked men, What is the Almighty? depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.'

Obs. 6. Again observe, it is a sign of a man turned beast to follow the passions and lusts of corrupt nature. Why? For then the government of reason is renounced, and all is yielded up into the hands of lust and appetite. In men reason should have the chief governance, and exercise a coercion and restraint over our affections; but now, when we yield up ourselves to the passionateness of lust, and are transported with violence of it, it answereth to that rage which reigneth in the beasts.

I shall take occasion here to show you how many ways a man turneth beast.

1. By an addictedness to sensual pleasures and delights. It is the beasts' happiness to enjoy pleasures without remorse; they have no conscience, they are not called to an account, &c. Now he is not worthy the name of a man, saith Tully, that would willingly spend one whole day in pleasure. We may take pleasures sometimes, but they should not take us; that is, we should not be vehemently addicted to them.

2. When, in the use of these delights, we keep neither modesty nor measure, this is but like swine to wallow in our own filthiness; a

beast can do no more; nay, many a beast would not do so much.

3. When men live by appetite rather than reason and conscience, feeding without fear, and nourishing the body, but taking no care to refresh the soul. This should humble many that think highly of themselves; they do but carry a beast's heart under a man's shape: while they are wholly given up to sensual delight, pampering the body, when in the meantime the precious but neglected soul may justly complain of hard usage.

Obs. 7. In the last place observe, that sensuality doth but make way for corruption: you may counterpoise the temptation to the sin with the punishment; usually secret sins and sweet sins meet with a heavy punishment: secret sins, that do not betray us to shame, may yet beget horror when we think of what will ensue; and sweet sins, that entice our affections, to prevent them we may counterbalance one affection with another, delight with fear. Well, then, to check the brutish rage of sensual inclinations, say, This will tend to my corruption, and perishing for ever: They that sow to the flesh shall reap corruption,' Gal. vi. 8. Carnal pleasures turn to an ill account in the issue: so Rom. viii. 13, If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die.' The Lord fenced Eden with a flaming sword; so is the garden of carnal delights fenced with the wrath of God: we run a great hazard to enter in. Say, then, Shall I for a superfluous cup adventure to drink a cup of wrath unmixed? for pleasures here, forfeit the pleasures at God s right hand for evermore? for a little wanton dalliance, lose the embraces of Christ when he cometh out to receive the saints to himself at the last day? God forbid.

Ver. 11. Woe unto them, for they have gone the way of Cain, and run

greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Korah.

Here the apostle cometh to reckon up their sins, and he doth it by examples which are suited so that they may imply both the sin and the punishment. Three are produced in this verse: that of Cain, to note their malice and cruelty; that of Balaam, to note their covetousness and seduction; that of Korah, to note their faction and sedition against magistracy and ministry, as Korah and his accomplices rose up against Moses and Aaron.

Woe unto them. It is prophetically spoken, not execratorily; as a threatening or denunciation, not as a curse. For they have gone in the way of Cain. Cain's example is produced, because he was the first and chief of them that departed from the true church and pure service of God: Gen. iv. 16, Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt,' &c. Tertullian saith, he was the devil's patriarch, the first root of the carnal seed, or of the seed of the serpent,' in whom persecution began. Now Cain's way was a way of murder; he slew his brother because he was more righteous and godly than himself, 1 John iii. 12, and so they go in his way that have an envy and hatred against their holy brethren, which many times proceedeth so far as violence, persecution, and murder. This instance is fitly applied to these seducers; for, if the Targum of Jerusalem say true, besides the particular grudge which Cain had against Abel about the acceptance of his sacrifice, there was a dispute which happened between them in the field concerning the providence of God, and the last judgment, and world to come. Non est judicium, nec judex, nec saeculum aliud, nec

merces bona pro justis, nec poena pro impiis: nec Dei misericordia creatus est mundus, nec ejus misericordia regitur, eo quod suscepta est oblatio tua cum beneplacito, mea vero non--Targ. Hieros. [139] So were these seducers exasperated against the orthodox, not only because of the greater presence of God among them, but also because of difference of judgment about Christ, the world to come, and providence, with other wholesome doctrines by which godliness is maintained. Again, Cain slew Abel; so were these Gnostics ready to break out into all violence against those that dissented from them, and stirred up the Jews to persecution against the Christians. Cain after this murder was haunted with his own ghost, and trembled wherever he came; so doth Cain's end attend Cain's curse, such quakings and fears of conscience following them wherever they went. It is said, The Lord set a mark upon Cain,' Gen. iv. 15: what this mark was is much disputed; most say it was a continual trembling and quaking throughout his body. Vide Aug., lib. xii. contra Faust., cap. 12; Chrysost. Hom. 19, in Gen. And the Septuagint render that, Gen. iv. 12, Thou shalt be a vagabond upon the earth, ste'non kai` tre'mon e'se epi` tes ges, Thou shalt be groaning and trembling upon the earth:' and the word Nod, the name of the place where he sojourned, is by interpretation agitatio, commotio, quaking or trembling:' o so`s tro'mos no'mos gugne'stho tois u`steron, and Basil Seleuc. apud Neiremb. Stromat., i. p. 23; which, if so, our wicked Quakers may see who was their patriarch. Now. from this first instance observe:--

Obs. 1. That the practice of wicked men now, and the practice of wicked men from the beginning is still the same. Cain's club, as Bucholcer speaketh, is still carried about in the world, stained with the blood of Abel; [140] see Gal. iv. 29, But as then, he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the spirit, even so it is

now.' So it was then, so it is now. so it will be while the spirit of the devil worketh in the world; we have the same original sin which they had in former times. For a long time a disease runneth in the blood, and is continued in a line and family; but after some generations it is worn out; but this filth will still run as long as there is a channel of carnal generation to convey it. Again, we have the same devil to tempt us; whoever is converted, he will never turn Christian to be sure; and there are the same provocations and occasions to exasperate men's corruptions. Well, then, let us not be over troubled; there is no new thing under the sun,' the same devil that rageth now hath been a murderer from the beginning,' John viii. 44; the same devil that deceiveth now was a liar from the beginning.' Are there those now that separate from all churches of Christ? There were Donatists in former times. Are there now that deny the Godhead of Christ? There were Arians then. Are there now ranters, familists? And there were Gnostics then. Are there bloody enemies of the truth? Every age can yield its Cains. Again, if we would better know the state of our times, let us blow off the dust from our old precedents; the devil doth but play over the old game; and though the scene be shifted and furnished with new actors, the plot is the same.

Obs. 2. Observe again, heretics and libertines usually turn persecutors; for it is said here, They go in the way of Cain.' Satan, that is a liar, is also a murderer; a false way cannot subsist without the props of blood and cruelty,--witness the Circumcellians, the Priscillianists, the Arians, the Donatists, the tragedies at Munster. An erroneous opinion is touchy, and therefore efferates the minds of men against those that oppose it. Believe not seducers, then, when they come in sheep's clothing; it is but that they may get a power to play the wolves the better: and when libertines, increase, let magistrates

look about them, there are, clouds gathering together towards a dismal storm; and though they seem to be meek and full of love, while their party is contemptible, yet when they grow considerable they appear in their colours. Again, let us bless God for the peace we enjoy; there are swarms and droves of locusts abroad, but blessed be God that there is a restraint upon them, that there is a spirit of perversity mingled with their counsels. I tell you, the great danger of the latter times is from libertines; many fear, a second deluge of antichristianism, but that is not so probable as the seditious insurrections of sectaries. What sad havoc will be made of the people of God when once those bloody-minded wretches get power! The latter times,' kairoi` chalepoi', perilous times,' 2 Tim. iii. 1. Why? From what sort of men will the danger arise? Not from the antichristian, or Popish party, so much as from a libertine party, from Quakers, ranters, anti-scripturists, familists, &c. The antichristian party carrieth things by power and worldly greatness; but this party there described is a creeping' party, that gets into houses, leadeth captive silly women,' ver. 6. The antichristian party abuseth the sword of the magistrate; but this is a traitorous party,' heady, high-minded, ver. 4, a party rising up against magistracy. The antichristian party are stiff and obstinate in their old forms; but this is a party of seekers, looking for new discoveries, holding nothing certain in religion, ever learning and never coming, eis epi'gnosin, to the acknowledgment of the truth,' ver. 7. In short, the party there described are a party that deny civil reverence, natural affection, and are contemptuous despisers of the true and holy servants of Christ; and all this carried on under a pretence and form of godliness. This is the party from whence I fear such danger and disturbance, if the Lord put not a hook into their jaws, or do not awaken the magistrate to look to the safety, not only

of Christ's interests, but his own. Cursing Balaams will soon prove bloody Cains, and wicked seducers tyrannous oppressors.

The next part of the description is, and run greedily after the error of Balaam for reward. His story begiuneth Num. xxii., and his tragedy you have Num. xxxi. 8. [141] Balaam had linguam venalem, oracles to sell; so they adulterated the doctrine of the gospel out of covetousness and filthy lucre. Simon Magus, out of whose school the Gnostics came, would, you know, buy and sell the Holy Ghost, Acts viii. Now, after this error, it is said, they ran greedily,' exechuthesan, were poured out,' it is a metaphor taken from a river overflowing the banks, or from a thing poured out from a bucket, with a full current. Now from hence observe:--

Obs. 1. That the devil enticeth his slaves to divers sins; as to the malice of Cain, so to the covetousness of Balaam.

Obs. 2. That men are usually carried into errors by the bait of gain and worldly profit: 2 Peter ii. 3, Through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you;' that which is the root of other evils' is often the root of heresies or sect-making. Souls are a precious commodity. Christ thought them worthy of his own blood, but seducers count them cheap ware; for their own gain and worldly interests they care not how they betray souls; yea, Christ himself is sold by them, as Judas purchased a field with the reward of iniquity,' Acts i. 18. Oh! then beware of covetousness, it is a great snare: a covetous man the devil hath him upon the hip, and how far, or whither he will carry him, he cannot tell. Balaam had many good gifts; God is said to have put words into his mouth,' Num. xxiii. 26; he asked counsel of the Lord, loath to go, yet covetousness by degrees wrought upon him.

Obs. 3. From the word exechuthesan, men sin with full bent of heart,

and are carried out violently against all restraints of conscience; as Balaam, notwithstanding the checks and disappointments which he met with in the way, the dumb ass forbidding the madness of the prophet,' 2 Peter ii. 16, yet was still hurried on by the violent impulsions of his own lust and greedy desire of reward; so the apostle speaketh of some that work uncleanness with greediness,' Eph. iv. 19. The motions of lust are rapid and violent; we are in earnest when we do the devil's work: a stone runneth down hill with a swift motion, because of its propension and tendency that way. Oh! when shall we learn to serve God as we have served Satan? Our work is better, our wages better, and our Master best of all. When shall we pour out our hearts in prayer as we do in sin? In the business of religion we act with a great deal of dividedness and partiality; our evil works are merely evil, but our good by no means can be purely good.

Obs. 4. Again observe, that covetousness is a violent, headstrong lust; you would think uncleanness is most violent, as having a rage and a passionateness in it; it is so; but covetousness is more strong, as engaging not only the lighter part of the affections, but the will itself: 1 Tim. vi. 19, He that will be rich,' &c. Fits of lust are ear nest for the present, but this is the constant and more deliberate bent of the heart towards that which is evil; watch the more, that your feet be not taken in this snare.

The last instance is, perished in the gainsaying of Korah. This is produced to note their factious practices. You have the story of him, Num. xvi. Being overcome with ambition he would take upon him the priesthood. He and his accomplices made head against Moses and Aaron, but he perished in the attempt; and so will these likewise that rise up against magistracy and ministry, as surely as if it were already accomplished; and therefore, though they were not as then born, yet

they are said to perish when Korah perished. From hence note:--

Obs. 1. That ambition breedeth faction, hence Korah gainsaid; Diotrephes loveth the pre-eminence, and therefore troubled the church, 3 John 10. All stirs begin first in our own lusts; men are discontented with their estate, would be higher, and therefore break rank. Lactantius observeth of the troubles of his age, thus--Fuerunt quidam nostrorum vel minus stabilitâ fide, vel minus docti, vel minus cauti; qui dissidium facerent unitatis et ecclesiam dissiparent, sed ii quorum fides fuit lubrica, cum Deum nosse se et colere simularent augendis opibus et honori studentes, affectabant maximum sacerdotium, et a potioribus victi, secedere cum suffragatoribus suis maluerant quam eos ferre praepositos, quibus concupiebant ante praeponi, &c. (Lactant. de Vera Sapientia, lib. iv. cap. 30.) It is an excellent thing to be contented with our own station; Jesus Christ was chadal ischim: Isa. liii. 3, The leaving-off of men,' or contented to be in the lowest rank. If God hath denied thee any condition in the world which thou affectest, thou art not worthy of it, or it is not fit for thee, &c.

Obs. 2. Observe, ambition, that carrieth men against ministry, carrieth them against magistracy also. Korah and his companions rose up against Moses and Aaron. The church and commonwealth are like the soul and the body; the one fareth the better for the welfare of the other; and seditious spirits will brook no restraint; let them alone in the church, and they will soon disturb the state also. But of this before, ver. 8.

Obs. 3. Once more. The levelling humour is no new thing in the church of God; their plea was, Num. xvi. 3, All the Lord's people are holy,' or saints, and why should any be set over them? Let us beware, then, of that parity which some affect; there must be rule and superiority, or all will come to nought. God made the world to consist of hills and

valleys, and in church and state there must be governors and governed, teachers and taught. It is Koran's sin to invade offices without a call, and to destroy that order which God hath established.

Obs. 4. Again, observe, schisms and factions in the church bring destruction in the end. Those that made a cleft in the congregation, the earth cleaved to swallow them up. Christ saith, Woe be to that man by whom offences come,' Mat. xviii. 7. It is sad to take offence, but worse to give it; all the mischief that ensueth will be reckoned to your score. Surely men would be more tender in this point if they did but think of the punishment that sensibly overtaketh the disturbers of a well-ordered society.

Obs. 5. Again, observe, the scripture speaketh of things to come as already past; for it is said, These perished,' &c. So Rev. xiv. 8, Babylon is fallen, is fallen.' What is threatened is as certain as if it were already accomplished. So also for promises; you have the mercy if you have the promise; by God's word all things were created and do subsist. Let it be, was enough to make a world; when God saith it shall be, is not the thing sure, though unlikely? Hath God's word lost anything of its creating power? God counteth our work done when but intended: Abraham offered,' &c., Heb. xi. 17. Well, then, let us be able by faith to see the ruin of wicked men when they reign most.

Obs. 6. Lastly, observe, wicked men may read their destruction, in the destruction of others that sinned before them. They transgress the same law, and God is as tender of it as ever; and there is the same providence to take vengeance, which is as mighty as ever; and they act out of the same lusts, which God hateth as much as ever: sin, is not grown less dangerous now in the latter days. Surely, then, a man. would think the old world should grow wiser, having so many precedents. Pride may see its downfall in Nebuchadnezzar, sedition in Korah, rebellion in

Absalom, violence in Cain, painted adulterousness in Jezebel, disorders in worship in the fall of the Bethshemites and the breach made upon Uzzah, the usurping of sacred offices without a call may see its danger in the leprosy of Uzziah. There is scarce a sin of pestilent influence of which we have not some example, which is set up like a mark in the way, in effect saying, Take heed, enter not here; it will prove your ruin and destruction; or, Look upon me and be godly.

[139] Vide Nieremberg. Strom, i. cap. 17, et Glassium, lib. i., Philol. Sacra, p. 60, et Christolog. Mosaicae Dissert. 5, p. 165.

[140] Multi adhuc sunt qui clavum sanguine Abelis rubentem circumferunt.'

[141] Balaam cursed Israel for hire against his own conscience; so did these pervert the truth.

Ver. 12. These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast

with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots.

In the former verse the apostle setteth them forth by examples, in this by similitudes. Let us go over the expressions apart, as the text offereth them. These are spots in your feasts of charity, spila'des. The word also signifieth rocks, but is fitly here rendered spots, for it is in Peter, spiloi kai` momoi: 2 Peter ii. 13, Spots they are and blemishes.' So he called them, as being in themselves defiled and to others disgraceful; or because defiling with their presence and infecting by their example. In your feasts of love or charity. These were suppers used in the primitive times, either to manifest their brotherly union, or for the comfort and refreshing of the poor, in obedience to Christ's injunction, Luke xiv. 12, 13, though little observed for the ends for which they were at first appointed, divisions being hereby nourished, 1 Cor. xi. 21, each faction by themselves taking their own supper, and the poor excluded, 1 Cor. xi. 22. Some dispute the lawfulness of them, it being an addition to the Lord's Supper, taken up in imitation of the heathens, and blasted by God's providence in the very beginning, never approved, and, it seemeth, but slightingly spoken of. Your love feasts,' saith our apostle. However, they might be law fully used. Tertullian showeth a lawful use of them in his time, Tert. in Apol., cap. 39, Coimus in coetum ut ad Deum quasi manu faustâ, &c. We meet together, saith he, that by a holy conspiracy we may set upon God by a force that is welcome to him, where prayers are made, and the scriptures opened, and after this meeting a supper,

begun with prayer: Non prius discumbitur quam oratio ad Deum praegustetur; editur quantum esurientes cupiunt, bibitur quantum pudicis est utile; and their discourses were such as did become the ears of God, and after washing they sang a psalm, and so soberly departed. Now these sensual persons did defile the love feast, the infamy of their lives being a scandal to the meeting, and the church fared ill for their sakes; for Peter maketh them to be spots, not only for their disorderly carriage at the meeting itself, but because of their constant course: 2 Peter ii. 13, They count it pleasure to riot away the daytime.' Partly by their indecent words and actions, when the Christians were met together, giving up themselves to excess: 1 Cor. i. 21, Some are drunken;' and libidinous practices, for this was frequent in the meetings of the Gnostics.

Obs. Observe hence, that sensual persons are the spots of a Christian society. They are not only filthy in themselves, but bring a dishonour upon the whole church whereof they are members: Heb. xii. 15, Take heed lest any root of bitterness spring up amongst you, whereby many may be defiled.' Now what that root of bitterness is he showeth, ver. 16, Lest there be any fornicator or profane person, as was Esau, who sold his birthright for a mess of pottage.' When any root springeth up, or breaketh out into a scandalous action, the whole society is defiled; therefore when such are discovered, they are to be cast out, for otherwise we should turn a church into a sty. Their spot is not as the spot of his children,' Deut. xxxii. 5. They have no God's mark, but Satan's. Calvin observed that nothing doth mischief to the church so much as remissness and kindness to wicked men. Partly as they do infect by the taint of their evil examples, and partly as they bring infamy upon the body; therefore cut off these ulcerous members. Again, we learn that the purest churches have their spots. In Christ's family

there was a devil: John vi., One of you is a devil.' You would be scared to see a devil come among you. Every malicious sinner is a devil, and every sensual sinner is a beast. Such may now and then creep into the church, but they should not be allowed there. They that put off the nature of man are unfit for the communion of saints. These are spots to be washed off. Holiness is the church's ornament: Ps. xciii. 5, Holiness becometh thy house, O Lord, for ever.' Again, they that are in a church should be the more careful; you defile yourselves else, and the society whereof you are members. Yea, your miscarriages reflect upon Christ himself. Carnal Christians carry up and down in the world the picture of the devil, and put Christ's name upon it, and so expose it to scorn and derision in the world. It was an old complaint of the Gentiles, mentioned by Cyprian in his book De Duplici Martyrio; the words are these: Ecce qui jactant se redemptos a tyrannide Sathanae, qui praedicant se mortuos mundo, nihilo minus vincuntur a cupiditatibus suis, quam nos quos dicunt teneri sub regno Sathanae. Quid prodest illis baptismus, quid prodest Spiritus Sanctus, cujus arbitrio dicunt se temperari? &c.--So in Salvian's time the heathens were wont to upbraid the Christians thus: Ubi est catholica lex quam credunt? Ubi sunt pietalis et castitatis exempla quae discunt? Evangelia legunt et impudici sunt; apostolos audiunt et inebriantur; Christum sequuntur et cupiunt, &c.--they talk of a holy Christ, and yet are unjust, unclean, wrathful, covetous; of a meek, patient Christ, and yet are rapacious and violent; of holy apostles, and yet are impure in their conversations. Our author goeth on thus: Sancta a Christianis fierent si sancta Christus docuisset, aestimari a ciultoribus potest iste qui colitur, quomodo bonus magister cujus tam malos esse videmus discipulos?--if their Christ were a holy, meek Christ, they would be better. Now judge you whether such wretches be not spots both to Christ

and the church, a disgrace to head and members. Therefore all church members should be more watchful and circumspect than others, lest they give occasion to those that watch for their halting to speak evil of the way of God.

The next clause is, when they feast with you. The word signifieth, to feast liberally together. This is added to show that they perverted the nature of the meeting, and made that an action of luxury which was at first an action of charity. In the feasts of the godly there was moderation and temperance, but these were blithe and jocund, filling their paunches at the charge of the church. What we translate feasting with you,' others read feasting upon you;' and 2 Peter ii. 13, Sporting themselves with their own deceivings, while they feast with you;' that is, by carnal gospelling and subtle devices justifying their own intemperance. Whence note:--

Obs. That it is an odious filthiness to make religion serve our bellies, and to turn charity into luxury. This is here charged upon them, and often practised in the world: Rom. xvi. 18, They serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly;' Christ hath the name, but the belly the respect. So Phil. iii. 19, Whose God is the belly.' When men aim at nothing but their own ease and pleasure, they set the belly in God's stead. Among the Papists, religious houses are but so many sties of filthiness, and the charity of well-meaning persons diverted to feed the luxury of a few slow-bellies.' Well, then, those that live upon church maintenance should be the more sober and temperate, though a double portion will well become them that take double pains; yet you should take heed of luxury, that you may not be corrupted with ease, that you may have enough for charity, that you may silence the clamours of the world; your temperance and sobriety should be known to all men. Paul giveth such an account of his life as will shame most ministers

when they think of it: 2 Cor. xi. 27, In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness;' and Paul had his enforced fasts, his voluntary fasts, not withstanding his great pains. Our lives should carry some proportion; we do not always suffer persecution, but we should still have a weaned heart in the fullest estate that doth befall us. Certainly maintenance would be more cheerfully given if well used.

Feeding themselves without fear, poimainontes heautous, feeding themselves as a shepherd doth his sheep. It noteth their excess, eating beyond all measure, and without respect to that communion that should be among saints. They fed themselves, not others; their own bodies, not others' souls: Ezek. xxxiv. 2, 3, Ye feed yourselves, but the flocks have ye not fed.' Whence note:--

Obs. That at our meetings and feasts we should have respect to Christian communion; not only take in meats, but give out gracious discourses and instructions. Christ, when he sat at meat, raised their thoughts to a better banquet: Luke xiv. 15, Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.' When the body is fed, let not the soul be neglected; the word of God is chi'los psuchon, the food of souls; it should not be wholly banished from our tables. At every meal the devil usually bringeth his dish. When our hearts are warmed with the use of the creature, he setteth our corruptions a-working, and we are ready to censure, or to brawl, or jest in an unseemly manner. It is but reason that Christ should set his dish upon our tables also; and it being a solemn time of coming together, we should take occasion to quicken each other to the love of God, and an affectionate remembrance of our Creator, by whose bounty we enjoy what is set before us, that the spiritual appetite may be refreshed as well as the bodily.

Here is yet another word in this clause, aphobos, without fear. The

meaning may be either without fear of God, or without fear of the church, or without fear of the snare in the creature. If you take the first sense, without fear of God,' you may either understand it of his presence or judgments.

1. Of his presence; they had no dread of him before whom the assembly was met. Note thence, it is sinful to sit down at meat without thoughts of God. You shall see it is said, Exod. xviii. 12, that the elders of Israel did eat with Moses' father-in-law before the Lord, that is, in his presence. When thou art eating bread, thou art before the Lord. As the eyes of all things look up unto him for meat in due season,' Ps. cxlv. 15, so are God's eyes upon us, upon our carriage and behaviour; therefore still retain a dread of his presence; the fear of God is a grace that is never out of season: Be thou in the fear of God all the day long;' not only in the morning, when immediately employed in acts of worship, but in thy shop, at thy meals. As the lungs are in continual exercise, whether we are sleeping or waking, so are some graces. Who is it that giveth us food and gladness'? Acts xiv. Shall we forget God when he remembereth us most? The Lord forbid; when his creatures are in our hands, let his eye be in our thoughts: Deut. viii. 10, 11, When thou hast eaten, and art full, beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God;' it will be a good curb to our loose and vain affections.

2. Without a fear of his judgments. Thence note, that riot and voluptuous living bringeth a brawn upon the heart, and men that are given up to a luxurious course grow secure. They that did drink wine in bowls,' did put far away the evil day,' Amos vi. 3; that is, all thought and sense of approaching judgments. When Jerusalem was grown riotous, she grew careless; and therefore God biddeth the prophet to eat his bread in trembling,' Ezek. xii. 18. Well, then, avoid

immoderation in carnal pleasures, as you would avoid security and hardness of heart. We lose our tenderness by bathing and steeping the soul in these delights; epicures are past feeling,' Eph. iv. 19; and the wanton is said to be dead while she liveth,' 1 Tim. v. 6. Wine and women take away the heart,' Hosea iv. 11, as they do extinguish every spark of conscience, and abate of the vigour and tenderness of our affections. It was and it is the opinion of libertines that it is perfection to get the victory of conscience, and to live as we list, without any trouble and sense of danger. Possibly such a thing may be aimed at here: it is the perfection of sinning, I confess, to do evil, and then choke the conscience with carnal pleasures, that we may not fear evil.

You may expound it without fear of the church' then assembled; in such an holy meeting they were not awed from riotous practices. Whence note:--

Obs. That sensuality maketh men impudent, partly because where spiritual sense is gone, shame is gone; partly because when the bodily spirits are warmed with wine and meat, men grow bold and venturous; Solomon saith, Prov. xxiii. 33, The drunkard's heart shall utter perverse things.' In such a case men take a liberty to speak or do anything that is unseemly. I do not exclude this sense, because Peter in the parallel place maketh them all along presumptuous and sensual, 2 Peter ii. 10-14.

You may expound it, without fear of the snare in the creatures.' Whence observe:--

Obs. In the use of pleasures and outward comforts there should be much caution. When Job's sons feasted, he falleth to sacrifice, lest they should have sinned against God,' Job i. 5. It is good to be jealous of ourselves with a holy jealousy, lest unawares we meet with a snare in

our cup or dish. At a feast there are more guests than are invited; evil spirits haunt such meetings, they watch to surprise us in and by the creature; and therefore we should watch, especially if we be given to appetite,' then put a knife to thy throat,' as Solomon saith: that which is sweet to the palate may wound the soul, and gluttony may creep upon good men before they are aware; as Austin confesseth, that he was far from drunkenness, but crapula nonnunquam surrepit servo tuo--sometimes he would eat too much; but, saith he, Lord, thou hast now taught me to use my meat as my medicine, to repair nature, not to oppress it; a holy course and to be imitated. Christians, you may think it needless that we should speak to you about your meat and drink, as if the light of conscience were pregnant and active enough to warn you in such cases. Oh! but you cannot be too cautious; the throat is a slippery place, and a sin may get down ere you are aware. Christ did not think it needless to warn his own disciples of excess: Luke xxi. 34, Take heed to yourselves, lest ye be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness,' &c.

The next clause is, clouds they are, without water, carried about of winds. Here now comes in a heap of similitudes to express their vain arrogancy and ostentation in professing themselves to be far above what indeed they were; though they were inapt to teach, and to every good work reprobate, yet they gave out as if they were illuminate men, and of a higher attainment than others. The first similitude is in these words, nephelai anudroi, clouds without water. Aristotle called barren and light clouds such as are carried up and down with the winds, omi'chlas; and to these are the seducers likened, because, though they seem to look black and promise rain, yet they do not give us one drop, one wholesome notion that may occasion more light in. the understanding, of saving doctrine, or any further relief for the poor

thirsty conscience, or any more forcible excitement to the practice and power of godliness. The apostle Peter, 2 Peter ii. 17, hath two similitudes--wells without water,' and clouds carried about with a tempest;' but here they are contracted into one. If you will have the Holy Ghost's own comment upon this similitude, see Prov. xxv. 14, He that boasteth of a false gift is like clouds and wind without rain.'

That which is observable is:--

Obs. 1. That the word of God is like a moistening rainy cloud: Deut. xxxii. 2, My doctrine shall distil like the dew, and my speech like the small rain.' Among the Hebrews the same word signifieth to teach and to rain. Well, then, let us, as parched ground, wait for the droppings of God's clouds. In this time of drought, when you go abroad into the fields, you shall see the grass burned and turned into stubble, and the earth gaping for a refreshing, and with a silent eloquence begging for the influences of the heavens; every chap is a mouth opened to swallow up the clouds as soon as they fall, or a cry to the God of heaven for a little rain. Just so should you come to wait upon God in the word: My soul desireth after thee as a thirsty land,' Ps. cxliii. 6. Oh! for a little refreshing from the presence of the Lord in his ordinance. Promise yourselves also that from the word which you would from rain, Isa. lv. 10, 11; this is the means by which the grace of God soaketh into the heart to make it fruitful.

Obs. 2. False teachers are clouds without rain; it is the proposition of the text; partly because they make show of more than they have; they boast of a false gift,' Prov. xxv. 14. There is a great deal of show to affect the minds of the simple, but little of substance and truth; like boxes in the apothecaries' shop, that have a fair title, but no medicine in them; much pretence of light and spirit, and when all comes to all, there is nothing but pride and boldness: Aperiunt fontes

doctrinae, sed non habent aquam scientiae--they will adventure to rain when they have but a few heat drops, a few poor fragments of truth, which, being disguised and transformed into some strange conceits, are cried up for rare mysteries and attainments. However, thus much we learn from them, that it is seducer-like to promise more than we can perform, and to be much in the pretence when we have little of real and true solid worth. Partly because they do not that good to others which they promise to do. Satan will always be found a liar; it is the property of his instruments to beguile men into a false expectation. Papists cry up their masses and indulgences, which yet do not one pennyworth of good. Preachers that study pomp and edification [142] come with much fancy and appearance; but, alas! these airy notions are too fine for the conscience. Seducers pretend to some heights of discovery, as if they would carry you into the third heaven, but you are where you were at first; they promise you hidden manna,' rare discoveries of Christ; but is your heart the better? Two things they never do, which may be explained by two properties of rain, namely, refreshing the earth, and making it fruitful.

1. Refreshing the earth. Do they offer any doctrine that will give the conscience solid comfort and relief in distress? Here you will find them barren clouds. The locusts tormented the dwellers on earth,' Rev. ix. 5; they tickle the fancy for a while, but when you come to die, and are serious, you must return to the old truths to find rest for your souls, Jer. vi. 16; your fancies then are like the brooks of Teman, consumed out of their place;' when Pharaoh was under any trouble, Moses and Aaron must be sent for, his magicians could not satisfy him nor ease him.

2. To make the earth fruitful. Do you find holiness improved by their notions? 2 Peter ii. 19, They promise liberty, when you are the

servants of corruption;' they promise a new way of mortification, but still your bondage under your lusts is increased.

Obs. 3. Again, in the third place, false teachers are light, easily driven up and down in various motions;' carried about of winds,' it is said in the text, sometimes with this opinion and sometimes with that, as light clouds yield to the motion of the winds; the winds are their corrupt passions, lusts, and interests: Eph. iv. 14, Be not tossed about with every wind of doctrine.' periphe'ro'menai, carried round the card and compass. When the chain of truth is once broken, man is at large, and being taken off from his bottom, left loose to strange contrary winds. We see many scrupulous persons, that at first made conscience of all things, afterward grow so loose as make conscience of nothing.

Obs. 4. Again, they are as clouds driven with a tempest;' so Peter. They do not yield rain, but breed factions, and schisms, and turbulent commotions; light clouds are driven with great violence. Well, then, Mark them that cause divisions and offences.' Rom. xvi. 17; they are not what they seem to be; you will find in the end that you get nothing by dancing after their pipe.

We go on with the verse. Trees whose fruit withereth, twice dead, plucked up by the roots. This is the second similitude; here are four properties of evil trees reckoned up by way of gradation.

The first is, trees whose fruit withereth. Let us first look to the grammatical interpretation of these words, and then the sense and accommodation of them. Dendra phthinoporina: the Vulgar readeth arbores autumnales. [143] In autumn things begin to decay, and trees lose both fruit and leaves; and so would some explain it, like trees that lose their leaves in harvest-time, and bring forth no fruit; some go another way, making it an allusion to a particular experiment of young plants,

who, if they flower at autumn, husbandmen take it for a sure sign that they will die. But similitudes are taken from things usual and known; I suppose, therefore, the apostle useth the word in its native and original signification. It is derived, para` to phthi'nesthai tas opo'ras, from corrupting fruits; and the meaning is, they bring forth no fruit but what is rotten and withered; and so it is applied to these seducers, whose lives were not full of good fruits. They pretend much, but what fruits do you find? More holiness, true mortification, strictness, piety to God, or equity and mercy to men? Nay, rather all manner of brutishness, disobedience to civil powers, neglect of God, abuse of gospel, contempt of their betters, &c.

Obs. I. Observe, corrupt doctrine produceth corrupt fruits. Principles have an influence upon the life and conversation; our Saviour directeth us to this way of scrutiny and trial, Mat. vii. 16, By their fruits you shall know them.' How can that be, since they do easily counterfeit a holiness? it is said before, they come in sheep's clothing.' I answer--Pretences will not last long; observe then narrowly, and you will find the wolf breaking out. Ay! but may not a good way be promoted by men of an ill life? Ans. Look to the fruits of the doctrine; if it hath no influence upon strictness, but be only curious, and tend to foment pride, malice, envy, sedition, and turbulent practices and contempt of superiors, certainly it is naught, whoever brings you that doctrine, whatever holiness they pretend in other things. [144] On the contrary side, the wisdom that is from above is full of good fruits,' James iii. 17, mercy, justice, piety, strictness, meekness, &c. The Lord sealeth the integrity of faithful teachers by guiding them to holiness, and by his judgments suffereth hypocrites and seducers to discover their filthiness and shame, that they may be manifested to the congregation,' Prov. xxvi. 26. Holiness hath been the usual badge of

truth, and the professors of it, when watched, have been in no point liable to exception, but in the matter of their God,' Pliny could find no fault with the Christians, but that they worshipped one Christ, whom they owned for a God, and had their hymnos antelucanos, their morning meetings and songs of praise to him. One of the notes by which the inquisitors of the Waldenses descried them was that they were sobrii et modesti vultu et habitu, of a sober deportment and modest garb. But may not seducers put on a demure garb, as Swenckfield prayed much, lived soberly, but his doctrine tended to looseness, destroyed the person of Christ, &c.? I answer, as before--You must consider the aim of the doctrine, which is not always to be discovered by the life of the first broacher of the error. Satan may transform himself into an angel of light to set on a design of darkness; paint will in time wear away--cito ad naturam ficta reciderunt suain: 2 Tim. iii. 9, They shall proceed no further, for their folly shall be made manifest to all men;' they begin with great shows at first to gain credit and entrance, but a discerning eye may find the deceit, and in due time God will discover them to the congregation. Well, then, try ways and persons by this note.

1. Ways. Men do not easily teach point-blank contrary to their manners: surely the devil would not assist to bring holiness in fashion, and promote Christian practice. Observe the fruits and evils both of their lives and doctrines: in two cases it is a sure note:--(1.) When there is a fair compliance between principles and practices; if neglect of God, mutinous practices, fraud, injustice, contempt of civil dignity, be the very aim and design of the doctrine, and accordingly men live, this is of the devil. (2.) If it be so generally, and in the most zealous of this way. Some men are of a reserved temper, not disposed to gross and sensual wickedness, and so can counterfeit the better; and

possibly so much of truth as they do retain in the midst of their errors may somewhat operate to sanctification; and, on the other side, a true way may be prejudiced if we should look to one or two; a street is not measured by the sink and channel, but if it be usual, and for the most part so, then their principles are corrupt. (3.) We may not be always enticed to a course of looseness or gross wickedness; if it be to a dead, powerless course, or formality, if it weaken the life and power of godliness in you, from such turn away, 2 Tim. iii. 5, your love to God, and delight in God, and converse with him in the Spirit, is forcibly lessened; fear the influence of such an opinion.

2. You may judge persons by it, especially yourselves. Wherever there is grace there will be fruits of grace, and corrupt fruits show a naughty tree. If the clusters be clusters of Sodom, and the grapes grapes of Gomorrah,' it showeth the vine was of that race and kind: Eph. v. 9, The fruit of the Spirit is righteousness, goodness, and truth.' The apostle instanceth in such fruits as concern civil commerce, partly because by these we adorn our profession, and set it off to others; partly because here we have a frequent trial, these graces being of a daily use and exercise.

But I would rather apply it by way of exhortation to those that profess the truth, to honour it in their lives. Let your manners be orthodox, lest you expose the ways of God to suspicion: Mat. iii. 8, Bring forth fruits worthy of repentance,' axi'ous metanoi'as, beseeming the change of your minds.

Obs. 2. The next evil property is a'karpa, without fruit, and in the application it implieth that they bring no honour to God, no good to others, neither are they wise for their own souls. To be barren and unfruitful under a profession of Christ, is a sign of great hypocrisy; he that hid his talent is called a naughty servant,' and, because of

his unprofitableness, cast into utter darkness,' Mat. xxv. A vine is good for nothing if it be not fruitful, not so much as to make a pin in the wall. Now God compareth Israel to an empty vine, Hosea x. 1, because they poured out all their strength, and time, and care upon their own interests. Well, then, Be not barren and unfruitful in the knowledge of Jesus Christ,' 2 Peter i. 8. Grace is an active thing; where it is it will show itself; garden trees must not be like the trees of the forest. If you would be fruitful:--

First, You must be planted with a right seed;' a wild vine will yield but wild grapes. The trees of righteousness' are of God's own planting,' Isa. lxi. 3; and when you are grafted into the noble vine, Christ Jesus, then are you laden with clusters, like the vine of Eshcol: John xv. 25, In me ye shall bring forth much fruit.

Secondly, There must be good husbandry and culture: Isa. v. 2, 3; Ps. xcii. 13, 14, Planted in the courts of God,' &c.; that is, the kindly soil. Good fruit needeth the manure of ordinances, wild plants grow and bear of their own accord.

Thirdly, This fruit must be ripe, not buds and blossoms, but fruit; you must not be almost, but altogether; there must be not only the flowers and leaves of profession, but the solid works of godliness. It is said here, trees without fruit,' but it is not said here, trees without leaves;' see John xv. 4. There are branches in the vine that are only pampinarii.

Fourthly, Fruit is for the owner. The profit of trees returneth to the husbandman and master; see John xv. 8, and Phil. i. 11. The spiritual life beginneth in God, and its tendency is to him. God must have the glory of all, but you shall not be without the comfort of it: Rom. vi. 22, Ye have your fruit to holiness, and the end everlasting life.' The grave is but a winter, it taketh off your leaves and verdure for the

present, the sap and life remaineth in the roots.

The next evil property, taken from trees and applied to men, is di`s apothano'nta, twice dead. If you apply this to the trees, they may be twice dead, either in regard of fruit, as a barren thing is said to be dead, as the deadness of Sarah's womb.' Rom. iv. 19; or, in regard of substance, rotten and like doaty trees, growing worse and worse; or twice dead,' by a Hebraism, very dead,' as double is put for much. But now, if you look to the reddition of this similitude, these seducers are twice dead,' both in regard of their natural estate, dead in trespasses and sins,' and their apostasy, or decay of that life which they seemed to have by the grace of the gospel, wilful defection making their case incurable, Heb. vi. 5, 6, 2 Peter ii. 20.

Obs. 1. Now, in this description you may observe a gradation:--(1.) Whose fruit withereth;' (2.) Without fruit;' (3.) Twice dead.' First bad fruit, and then leaves, and then rottenness. Note, that deceivers and hypocrites grow worse and worse.' You have it from the apostle Paul also, 2 Tim. iii. 13, But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.' They deceive others, and the devil deceiveth them. The two states are not at a stay; wicked men grow worse and worse, and godly men grow better and better. Observe, then, which way is your progress and growth. The glory of the Lord, in Ezekiel, departed by degrees: first from the holy place, then from the altar of burnt-offering, then the threshold of the house, then the city, then the mountain which is on the east side of the city; it stood hovering there, as loath to be gone. So the Spirit of God doth not all at once depart from men, but by degrees. First men suspect duties, then dispute against them, then shake them off, and then come to beastliness and profaneness. Or, if you will, take the gradation thus:--First, God is cast out of the closet, private intercourses are neglected; then out

of the family; then out of the congregation, and public ordinances seem useless things; and then blasphemies and a profane vertiginous spirit ensueth. First, men begin to wrangle, and sceptically to debate matters of religion, and within a while to oppose the truth: The beginning is foolishness, and the latter end is mischievous madness,' Eccles. x. 13.

Obs. 2. Again, I observe, men that fall off from the profession of the truth are twice dead. To natural they bring on judicial hardness; when they seemed to make some escape from the misery of nature they relapse into it again, and then their chains are doubled; as a prisoner that hath once broken prison, if taken again, is laden with irons. Two ways do natural men come to be twice dead--by custom in sinning, and by a revolt from God after they had given their names to him. By custom in sinning, for by that means they are hardened in their way, and given up to a reprobate mind,' so as to lose all sense of sin, Rom. i. 26-28; and by revolt from God; those that will, after trial, forsake him, no wonder if God leave them to their own choice, to be held under the power of the devil, by a dark and foolish heart.

There is one clause yet remaining, ekrizothenta, plucked up by the roots, and then trees are past all hope of springing and sprouting again; and so it fitly noteth their incurable apostasy. In this latter clause is set forth:--(1.) Their being deprived of all spiritual communion with Christ and his mystical body. (2.) Their incapacity to bring forth fruit. (3.) Their readiness for burning and destruction.

Note:--

Obs. That barren and corrupt trees shall utterly be rooted out of God's vineyard; they shall not have a visible abode and standing there. Now this is brought to pass partly by their own act: 1 John ii. 19, They went out from us because they were not of us; for if they were of us, they would have continued with us;' they separated themselves from the

communion of the faithful, to which they did never truly belong, both from the doctrine professed in the church, and fellowship with them in the use of ordinances. Partly by God's act, an act of judgment on his part: Rom. xi. 20, For unbelief were they broken off.' Partly by the act of the church, by which scandalous sinners are taken from among them: 1 Cor. v. 13, Put away from among yourselves that wicked person.' Well, then, let us walk so that this heavy judgment may never be laid upon us; let us get a real union with Christ, for then we can never be broken off: you can no more sever the leaven and the dough than Christ and a believer, [145] &c. Walk with the more caution: Be not high-minded, but fear;' it is dreadful to be cast out of the true church; the finger that is cut off from the hand is also cut off from the head. That censure, if rightly administered against us, should be matter of great sorrow and humiliation to us, &c.

[142] Qu. not edification'?--ED.

[143] Letifer autumnus.'--Juvenal.

[144] See Dr Hammond, Pract. Cat., pp. 142, 145.

[145] Qu. You can no more sever Christ and a believer than the leaven and the dough'?--ED.

Ver. 13. Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their shame; wandering

stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.

Here are two other comparisons, the one taken from raging waves,' the other from wandering stars.' For the first, raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame, there is a great deal of variety among interpreters in the application or accommodation of this simili tude; some go one way, some another. Waves are not more various and uncertain in their motions than they in their expositions. Some apply it to their levity and inconstancy, some to their restless activity in sin, some to their turbulency, others to their pride and ostentation. In such uncertainty what shall we fix upon? Two things will direct us--the scope, and the force of the words. The scope of the apostle in all these similitudes is to show that these seducers were nothing less than what they pretended to be: clouds, but dry barren clouds; trees, but such as bore either none or rotten fruit; waves, that seemed to mount up unto heaven, and to promise great matters, as if they would swallow up the whole earth, but being dashed against a rock, all this raging and swelling turneth into a little foam and froth. So Calvin applieth it to the libertines, who scorn and disdain the common forms of speech, and talk of illumination and deification, so that their hearers seem to be rapt into the heavens; but, alas! they suddenly fall into beastly errors.

Obs. 1. From the scope observe, that spiritual boasters will certainly come short of their great promises. All is but noise, such as is made by empty vessels. In the latter times you are troubled with boasters,' 2 Tim. iii. 2, men that boast of depths, and seem to be wise and

knowing above the ordinary sort, that will pretend to show you new ways a shorter cut to heaven, and rare discoveries of Christ and gospel light, &c.; but, alas! in the issue they leave you much more the servants of sin than you were before.

But let us a little examine the force of the words. The whole similitude alludeth to what is said of wicked men in general, Isa. lvii. 20, The wicked are like a troubled sea that cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.'

Obs. 2. Observe, in the first place, that they are waves, which noteth their inconstancy: Gen. xlix. 4, Reuben is as unstable as water.' Water, you know, is movable, soon furled, and driven to and fro by the winds; so were these carried about with every wind of doctrine,' Eph. iv. 14. Note thence, that seducers are unsettled and uncertain in their opinions; so 2 Peter iii. 16, Unlearned and unstable.' If you ask why? Because they are not rooted and grounded in their profession, but led by sudden affection and interests rather than judgment; they are unstable because unlearned; such as do not proceed upon clear and certain grounds, and those whom they work upon are of no principle, beguiling unstable souls.' Well, then, discover them by their levity; you will never have comfort and certainty in following them who, like weathercocks, turn with every wind. Ecebolius is infamous to all ages, see Socrat. Scholast., lib. iii. cap. 2. He was professor of eloquence at Constantinople, under Constantius zealous of Christian religion, under Julian a Pagan, and when he was dead, he professed Christianity again; but then he came weeping to the church, pate'sate me` to` a'las to` anai'stheton--tread upon me, unsavoury salt, and cast me to the dunghill. Constantius Chlorus, though a heathen (both Sozomen and Eusebius give us the story) yet loved constancy and faithfulness in men as to their profession; he made proclamation that whosoever would not

sacrifice should be discarded, and no more retained in pay with him; but when many false Christians had renounced their profession for gain and preserving their civil interests, he would not receive them, saying, pos ga`r a'n po'te basilei pi'stin phula'xousi peri` to` krei'tton alontes agno'monein--how can they keep faith with their king and emperor that would falter in a higher matter, in the business of their God and religion, for a small and petty interest? Much to the same purpose there is a passage of Theodoric, king of the Goths, who loved a deacon who was of the orthodox profession, though he himself was an Arian; the deacon, to please the king the more, changed his religion, and professed Arianism also; but he beheaded him, saying, ei to The'o pi'stin ouk ephu'laxas, pos anthro'po phula'xeis sunei'desin ugiai'nousan--if thou hast not kept thy faith with God, how wilt thou preserve a good conscience in thy duty to men? The story is in Theodoret. Some are merely waves, rolling hither and thither in a doubtful uncertainty.

Waves of the sea. There you have their restless activity, they are always tossed to and fro: Jer. xlix. 23, The Lord shall trouble Damascus, that she shall become like a fearful sea that cannot rest;' so these cannot rest from evil: 2 Peter ii. 14, Eyes full of adultery, that cannot cease from sin.'

Obs. Usually wicked men are of an unquiet spirit, restless in evil. They are acted by Satan, who is a restless spirit, and there is a great correspondency between their activeness in sin and the importunity of Satan's malice: 1 Peter v. 8, He goeth about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Now you shall see the like diligence and readiness in his instruments; they walk the devil's round: Mat. xxiii.15, Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte,' &c. Blind zeal leadeth on

men with an incessant rage to poison others with their error, and draw them to their sect. Well, then, we may learn diligence from our enemies. Shall they be more busy to pervert the truth than we to propagate it? Dan. xii. 4, Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.' Once more, learn that it is a sign of a naughty heart to be restless in sin: Prov. iv. 16, They sleep not unless they have done mischief, and their sleep is taken from them unless they cause some to fall.'

Raging loaves of the sea. There you have their turbulency; they fill all places with troubles and strifes.

Obs. Wicked seducers are usually of a turbulent and impetuous spirit. Why? Because they are urged by their own pride and vanity, and have lost all restraints of modesty, and are usually, as to their constitution, of violent and eager spirits. Well, then, be not borne down with impudence and rage; there may be daring attempts and much resolution in an ill cause; besides it is an hint to the magistrate to look to seducers betimes, for they are raging waves.'

The next expression is foaming out their own shame, as a raging sea casteth up mire and dirt; or it alludeth to that scum and froth which the waves leave upon the rocks, and so it noteth the abominableness of their opinions and practices. Whence note:--

Obs. That though errors come in blushing, and with a modest dress, yet usually they go out of the world with a great deal of shame. They dash against the rock upon which the church is built, and what is the issue? They are covered with froth and foam: 1 Cor. iii. 13, The day shall declare it;' that is, time, whose daughter truth is: have a little patience, and you shall see that all that is but hay and stubble which is accounted gold. When worldly interests are unconcerned, and the heat of contention a little allayed, that men may have more clear

discerning, and the world hath a little more experience of the fruit of false ways and opinions, there will not need any great confutation: evil men will sufficiently bewray their own filthiness. Guicciardini saith of the expedition of Charles the Ninth into Italy, that he came in like lightning, and went out like the snuff of a candle. So errors come in like a raging wave, as if they would bear all before them, but they go out like foam and froth, in scorn and infamy. Well, then, observe the fruitlessness of all Satan's attempts: The gates of hell shall not prevail against this rock,' Mat. xvi. 18. By the gates of hell,' is meant strength and counsel, power and policy; for in the gates were their ammunition and seats of judicature. They that seek to slaver the church or deface the truth, which is the foundation of it, they do but spit against the wind, the drivel is returned upon their own faces. We often betray our trust and faith by our passions; we have not a holy greatness of mind to look above every trouble. Contend for God, but wait upon him; Satan may prevail a long time, but he can never carry it clearly from Christ: the Arians had a day of it, but they soon grew infamous for their cruelty and baseness.

We come now to the next similitude, wandering stars, asteres planetai. It may be taken two ways--properly or improperly. (1.) Properly, for the stars which we call planets, or wandering, though indeed no stars wander less than they do; they have their name from the opinion and common judgment of sense, because they are not carried about the whole circuit of the heavens, but in a shorter orb and course. In themselves they have certain stated motions, and do keep the just points of their compass: The sun knoweth his going down,' Ps. civ. (2.) Improperly; there are a second sort of wandering stars, which Aristotle calleth aste'ras diathe'ontas, running and gliding stars; not stars indeed, but only dry exhalations inflamed, which glare much and deceive the eye

with an appearance of light, but soon vanish and are quenched. Now these glancing, shooting stars do excellently express the quality of these seducers, who pretended great knowledge, being therefore called Gnostics, and gave out themselves for illuminate and profound doctors, but were various and uncertain in their motions, and soon extinguished and obscured. It is notable that the apostle ransacketh all the elements for comparisons whereby to set them forth: The air, clouds without water;' the earth, barren, rotten trees;' the water, there he compareth them to raging waves;' the fire, to wandering stars,' which are of a fiery nature. A fruitful fancy can make use of all the world, and a willing mind cannot want objects of meditation. But let us come to observe something from this similitude.

Obs. The guides of the Lord's people should be stars, but not wandering, gliding stars. These seducers pretended to be stars,' and great lights of the church (which is the office of the ministers), but were indeed wandering stars,' and such as did seduce and cause to err.

First, Stars they should be:--(1.) In regard of the light of doctrine: Mat. v. 14, Ye are the light of the world,' that is Christ's honour, John i. 9; but he taketh his own crown and puts it upon his servants' heads. They are the light in a subordinate sense; stars, though not the sun; he is the original and fountain of all light, and we are used as a means to convey it to others. Thus John is called, John v. 35, A burning and a shining light.' He useth our service to dispel the mists of error, the night of profaneness, and the darkness of false worship. You had need prize those whom God hath set over you; they are light, and will you quench the light of Israel'? 2 Sam. xxi. 17. (2.) In regard of the lustre of their conversations. It is said of all Christians, Phil. ii. 15, that they should shine as lights in this world;' they are the bright part of the world, as the stars are the

shining part of heaven; as the star directed the wise men to Christ, so they must shine to light others by their example to him, as it is required of all Christians, much more of ministers, who are placed in a higher orb and sphere. Alas! we are but dim lights; we have our spots and eclipses, but this sets the world a-talking.

Secondly, They must not be gliding falling stars; that is charged upon these seducers. A false teacher and a falling star symboliseth in three respects:--(1.) It is but a counterfeit star; so is he an angel of light; only in appearance, 2 Cor. xi. 14. A true Christian should covet more to be than to seem to be; to be light in the Lord' before he is a light in the world.' Hypocrites are all for appearance. (2.) In respect of the uncertainty of its motion. Falling stars are not moved with the heavens, but with the motion of the air, hither and thither, and so are no sure direction. So are they inconstant and unstable in the doctrines which they teach, running from opinion to opinion; vagabond lights, that seduce, not direct, as meteors mislead travellers out of the way. (3.) In regard of the fatal issue. A wandering star falleth to the ground, and becometh a dark slime and jelly; so their pretences vanish at length, and they are found to be those that were never enlightened and fixed in the firmament of God; counterfeits cannot last long; we see stars shoot in the turn of an eye, and Satan's instruments fall from heaven like lightning,

Well, then, for a guide to heaven, choose a star, but not a wandering star. New light is admired, but it should be suspected rather. Usually we are rather for things new than excellent: homini ingenitum est magis nova quam magna mirari, saith Seneca. We gaze more on a comet than the sun. Check this itch; those that are various and given to changes are no lights for you; and if they be not burning and shining lights, avoid them. True stars have influences; they do not only enlighten and fill

you with notions, but inflame and stir you to practice.

The last clause of the text is, to whom is reserved blackness of darkness for ever. Having described them in several metaphors, he cometh to speak again of their punishment, continuing the last metaphor, as some suppose, as glaring meteors after a while vanish into a perpetual night and darkness, and are no more seen and heard of; so these vanish, and are swallowed up of the horrors of eternal darkness.

In this threatening three things are notable:--(1.) The dreadfulness of the punishment; (2.) The sureness; (3.) The suitableness of it.

1. The dreadfulness, in two circumstances:--(1.) The nature of it; (2.) The duration of it.

[1.] The nature of it, ho zophos tou skotous, the blackness of darkness.' It is a Hebraism for exceeding great darkness, called in the gospel to` sko`tos to` exo'teron, outer darkness,' as being, furthest from God, the fountain of life and glory, and so expressing that extreme misery, horror, and torment which is in hell. Hell is a dark and dismal region, where men lie deprived of the light of God's countenance, tormented with presence of devils, and become the burden of their own thoughts, calling to remembrance their past sins, and having an active sense of their present pains, and dreadfully looking still for future judgment; but of this before. [146] Well, then, let us not begin our hell ourselves, by shunning God's presence, by preferring carnal pleasures before the light of his countenance, by remaining in the night or darkness of ignorance or error, by darkening the glory of our holy profession through scandalous living, by sinning against conscience, and so providing food for the gnawing worm, or matter of despair to ourselves to all eternity. Briefly, let us beware of a dark and doubtful condition; it carrieth too great a proportion with hell; the more bondage we have, the more fearful looking for of judgment,'

the more are we like the damned; as the more assured and possessed of God's love, the more like the blessed; joy in the Holy Ghost is the suburbs of heaven.

[2.] The next thing is the duration, the blackness of darkness for ever. The torment prepared for the wicked is everlasting, their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched,' Mark ix. 44. This is the hell of hell, that, as the torments there are without measure, so without end; vivere nolunt, mori nesciunt. Here they might have life, and would not, and now would have death, and cannot: Rev. xx. 10, Tormented for ever and ever.' Woe, alas! it is for ever. Poor wicked wretches! whose bodies shrink at the prick of a pin or the flame of a candle, how will they endure those endless pains? When their restless thoughts shall have run through thousands of years, they must look for more: the pains of the damned are eternal; partly because of the greatness of the majesty against whom they have sinned. We are finite creatures, and so not fit to judge of the nature of an offence against an infinite God; the Lawgiver best knoweth the merit of sin, which is the transgression of the law, as a jeweller knoweth the price of a jewel, and can best give sentence in the case what he is to pay that hath lost or spoiled it. With man offences of a quick execution meet with a long punishment, and the continuance of the penalty in no case is to be measured with the continuance of the act of sin--Scelus non temporis magnitudine sed iniquitatis magnitudine metiendum est. Partly because man sinneth as long as he can; he sinneth in aeterno suo, as Aquinas, and therefore is punished in aeterno Dei. We would live for ever to sin for ever; in hell the desire of sinning is not extinguished or mortified. [147] Partly because they despised an eternal happiness, and therefore do justly suffer an eternal torment. Partly because they are in their final estate: Peace upon earth,' Luke ii. 14. Here God is

upon a treaty with us, but there we are beyond a possibility of repentance and pardon. Partly because their obligations to God are infinite, and so their punishment riseth according to the excess of their obligations. Well, then, this representeth the folly of sinners, that will run the hazard of eternal torments for a little temporal satisfaction, as he cried out, For how short a pleasure have I lost a kingdom! when he had parted with his sovereignty for a draught of water. So you, out of a desire of present contentment, forfeit heaven, and run the hazard of the horrors of everlasting darkness; therefore, to counterbalance the violence of a temptation it is good to think of it, Can I dwell with everlasting burnings? If a man be sick in the night, he tumbleth and tosseth and telleth the hours, and wisheth it were day; oh! what will a man do that is held under an everlasting night and darkness? We are wont to think a sermon long, a prayer long; what will hell be, when conscience shall repeat over the passages of our lives, and remember us of the wrath of God that endureth for ever? Here sin is ever working, all the day it runneth in the mind, all the night it playeth in the fancy; we begin the morning with it, and end the day with it, and in the visions of the night it easily gets the start, and outrunneth reason and conscience; there the guilt of it will torment us day and night, and man is ever haunted with his own horrors, and the wrath of God inflicted upon him.

2. So much for the terribleness of the judgment; now, secondly, let us consider the sureness of it, tetereta‹, it is reserved. Hell torment is sure, prepared, kept for the wicked; so Mat. xxv., Prepared for the devil and his angels.' Heaven is prepared for the saints, and they for it. In one place it is said, The kingdom prepared for you;' in another, Vessels of mercy aforehand prepared unto glory.' So is hell fitted for the wicked, and they fit themselves for hell. God prepareth the saints

and fitteth them, but endureth the wicked, and beareth with them whilst they fit themselves for destruction;' see Rom. ix. 22, 23. Carnal men may lord it abroad for a while, and ruffle and shine in worldly pomp, but the blackness of darkness is kept for them.

3. Observe the suitableness of the judgment to the sin; he saith darkness, not fire. Clouds that darken the truth are justly punished with the mists of darkness for ever;' see 2 Peter ii. 17. They that would quench the true light are cast into eternal darkness. God loveth to retaliate, that men may read their sin in their judgment here in the world, he may do it in mercy to the saints. Jacob, that came the younger for the elder, to blind Isaac, had the elder daughter given him instead of the younger. Asa, that put the prophet in the stocks, was diseased in his feet. But in hell he doth it for the greater horror to the wicked; they that chose left-hand blessings, Prov. iii. 16, are justly placed with the goats on the left hand, Mat. xxv.; he that denied a crumb could not receive a drop; they that cared not for God's company are then banished out of his presence, and to those that loved darkness more than light is the mist of darkness reserved for ever.'

[146] See ver. 6, on those words, chains of everlasting darkness; and ver. 7, those words, eternal fire.

[147] Wicked men are not changed in hell; melted metal groweth hard again; the bad thief had one foot in hell, and yet dieth blaspheming; their judgments are changed, not their hearts; they would have dallied with God longer, grieved his Spirit here in the world longer, but that their candle went out, &c.

Ver. 14. And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these,

saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints.

The apostle urgeth another argument to imply the destruction of those seducers, and that is, the prophecy of Enoch. Whether this prophecy were written or not, the same Spirit that spake in Enoch inspired our apostle: if he received it by tradition, it is here made authentic and put into the canon. [148] The Jews have some relics of this prophecy in their writings, and some talk of a volume, extant in the primitive times, consisting of 4082 lines, called the Prophecy of Enoch; but that was condemned for spurious and apocryphal. Tertullian saith there was a prophecy of Enoch kept by Noah in the ark, which book is now lost. Be it so; many good books may be lost, but no scripture. But most probably it was a prophecy that went from hand to hand, from father to son. Jude saith, Enoch prophesied;' he doth not say it is written, as quoting a passage of scripture. But why should he rather produce Enoch's prophecy, than a passage out of the authentic books of scripture, where are many such to this purpose? I answer--(1.) It was done by the providence of God, to preserve this memorial to the church. (2.) Because ancient things are more venerable, for by all men's confession those times were most simple and free partium studio, from factions and partialities; therefore all along the apostle bringeth instances of the most ancient date.

And Enoch, the seventh from Adam, that is, inclusivè, putting Adam for the first. But why is this circumstance mentioned? I answer--(1.) To commend the antiquity of the doctrine, the seventh in descent from Adam intimates that judgment was to be administered by Christ. (2.) Some

observe a mystery; the seventh person was a prophet; as the seventh day was holy. (3.) I think it is to, distinguish him from Enoch, the son of Cain, who was the third from Adam, as Enoch, the son of Seth, was the seventh; see Gen. iv. 17. Prophesied; that Enoch was a prophet is clear here, and may be gathered from Gen. v. 22, where he is said to walk with God,' a phrase proper to those that served the Lord in some near way of ministration. It is there applied to Enoch, who was a prophet, and to Noah, Gen. vi. 9, who was a preacher of righteousness,' 2 Peter ii. 5; and to Eli, 1 Sam. ii. 30, who was a priest. Of these, saying. Of these,' because of such like; it is a general prophecy brought down to a particular case and instance. The Lord cometh; that is, the Lord Jesus, appointed to be the judge of the world; nay, mark it, Behold, the Lord cometh, as putting it before their eyes. Cometh, elthe, is come; that is, he shall as certainly come as if he were come already. The Jews say the great excommunication Maranatha was instituted by Enoch; the word signifieth The Lord cometh.' With ten thousand of his saints; it may be rendered with his holy myriads,' or ten thousands,' an uncertain number for a certain; that was their highest and roundest reckoning. The meaning is, with huge multitudes of angels and saints: as the apostle, 1 Thes. iii. 13, At the coming of the Lord Jesus with all his saints;' Zech. xiv. 5, The Lord my God shall come, and all thy saints with thee;' not only the angels, but the saints do help to make up the triumphs of that day.

The notes are these:--

Obs. 1. That what is spoken in the word in general doth as much concern us as if it were spoken to our own persons. Enoch prophesied of these, &c. Particulars are comprised in their generals; some scriptures speak directly to every single person; the Decalogue is most ex press in this way, thou, thou, &c., as aiming to awaken every one to a sense of their

duty; God doth as it were talk with every person immediately. The gospel indeed speaketh largely, Come, all ye,' &c., as excluding and exempting none out of the hopes of it; yet sometimes the gospel speaketh as particularly as the law, especially where the condition is annexed to the offer; as Rom. x. 9, If thou believest in the Lord Jesus with thine heart,' &c. If you, as speaking to me; [149] if thou, as speaking to thee, and every other man in particular. Well, then, though the word speaketh generally, take home your own share, as men cut a passage out of the common river to water their own fields. Let not the scriptures speak in vain,' James iv. 5. We are all concerned when his speech is directed to men of our condition: Ps. xxvii. 8, Thou saidst, Seek ye my face;' and David subsumeth, Thy face, Lord, will I seek.' Obs. 2. Prophecy or preaching; the word is ancient, for Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied.' Still some have been set apart for this work; Enoch was a prophet, and Noah a preacher of righteousness. It is sad that in the latter end of six thousand years, we should be rooting up an ancient ordinance that hath stood from the beginning of the world till now. In the old time before the law there were some to teach, every master in his family, churches were then in houses, and some special prophets to instruct in public, and continue the tradition. Under the law also there were some solemnly set apart for the work of the tabernacle, and prophets immediately called to deliver the special messages of God, not only for the instruction of the present age, but to increase the canon or rule of faith and manners, even for our comfort. And in Christ's time apostles were added to unveil the figures of the law and deliver the gospel more clearly; and when once the canon was settled, and enough delivered to make us wise to salvation, some were set apart by the constitution of Christ as pastors and teachers to explain and apply scripture; and though all the saints be kings and

priests to God,' yet the office ministerial must not be invaded; for as spiritual kingship is no warrant to disturb the magistrate, or to wrest the exercise of authority out of his hands, so spiritual priesthood doth not lay the ministry in common; but still there must be some set apart for that work. If we grudge at the institution, we repine at Christ's bounty to us, and in effect bid him take his gift to himself, for in the day of his royalty or ascension he gave gifts to men, some to be apostles, some prophets, some pastors, some teachers,' &c., Eph. iv. 11.

Obs. 3. That the doctrine of the day of judgment is ancient, long since foretold. Enoch prophesied of it, yea, the sentence of death pronounced in paradise did imply it, and the Lord's messengers have ever urged the terror of it. Many passages in Moses may be applied to this purpose, Deut. xxxii. David clearly saith, Ps. 1. 22, I will set thy sins in order before thee; now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver.' So Solomon, Eccles. xi. 9, Remember that for all these things thou shalt come to judgment.' It were needless to tell you of Daniel, Joel, Malachi, Christ, Paul, Peter, John, Jude. Still this truth was pressed in the church; nay, the Lord was pleased to grant some intimation of it to the heathens, e'xei d' su'rano'then basileu`s, &c., in the fragments of the sybils in Eusebius; by the light of nature the philosophers had some dark and uncertain guesses at such a thing. Conscience is soon sensible of the truth of it, as Felix trembled when it was mentioned, Acts xxiv. The ancient judgments of drowning the world and burning Sodom were types and forerunners of it. Well, then, entertain this doctrine with the more certainty: verum quod primum--that which is first is true. We are secret atheists; can a man believe judgment to come that walloweth in sin and profaneness? Our actions are the best image and expression of

our thoughts. The apostle saith, The latter days shall yield scoffers and mockers,' 2 Peter iii. There may be atheists in the church, but there are none in hell. We deny and doubt of that at which the devils tremble. If the Spirit, scripture, conscience, reason will not teach men, there is no other way of learning but by feeling and experience.

Obs. 4. Enoch prophesied, the man that walked with God; he could see the day of judgment, though so far off.

Those that have most communion with God do most discern his mind. Let a man walk humbly and closely with God, and he is near, not only the root of life, but the fountain of light:' Ps. xxv. 14, The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him.' When the disciples doubted of anything, they pointed to him whom Jesus loved, and who leaned on Jesus' bosom, John xiii. 23. Those that are in Christ's bosom know his mind. Well, then, if we would pry more deeply into the things of God, walk humbly and closely with him. There is a promise, John vii. 17, He that will do the will of God, shall know what doctrine is of God.' Pure souls are soonest enlightened, [150] and they discern most of the Lord's counsel who are not darkened with lusts and interests.

Obs. 5. From that behold. He speaketh of this day of the Lord, as if it were instant and before their eyes.

We should always realise the day of the Lord, and represent it to our thoughts as near at hand. It is the work of faith to give things ab sent and at a distance a present being in the heart of a believer, Heb. xi. 1. Six thousand years ago Enoch said, Behold, he cometh.' It is not for us to fix the seasons which the Father hath put in his own hands, there may be much of snare and temptation in that; therefore the apostle Paul reproveth them that confidently gave it out that the day of the Lord was at hand, 2 Thes. ii. 2, ene'steke, instantly to come. Austin giveth a reason of it thus, Ne forte cum transisset tempus quo

eum credebunt esse venturum de ipsa mercede fidei desperarent--lest they should question all, when deceived in the time of their foresetting, which indeed experience hath verified. In the year of Christ 1001, when many vain opinions and conceits of the end of the world were disappointed, men began publicly to assert, mundus est incorruptibilis (Bar. ad annum 1001). The faith of all truths is shaken by the disappointment of a rash confidence; but though we are not punctually to state the time, yet the thing being certain, faith should represent it to the thoughts as actually present, and we should live as if the trumpet were always sounding in our ears, and the judge were set, and the books opened. To put off the thought of that which will one day, and within a short time, come about, is a spice of atheism, Amos vi. 3; for things foretold in the word should be as certain, and have a like influence upon us, as if they were already accomplished: Behold, the Lord is come.'

Obs. 6. From that with ten thousand of his saints. When Christ cometh to judgment, his saints come to judge the world with him. When the wicked are filled with amazement, they come in Christ's company, partly that the world may know what shall be done to the men whom God will honour, and that Christ may be admired' in the glory he putteth upon them, 2 Thes. i. 10: partly that Christ may make them partakers of the mediatory kingdom; therefore they are associated with him in judging the world, Mat. xix. 28; their suffrage is required as approving the sentence of the judge, 2 Cor. vi. 2: partly for the greater sorrow of the wicked; they shall be judged by mean men, whom they once hated and persecuted: Ps. xlix. 14, The upright shall have dominion over them in the morning,' that is, of the resurrection; they counted their lives madness and folly, but now they are exalted: partly to make amends for the perverse censures of worldly men; now they are judged every day,

counted the off-scouring and reproach of men; but then the Lord will clear up their innocency, and they shall sit as justices with the judge upon the bench. Well, then--(1.) Be saints, if you would have a saint's privilege. Felons may be jovial in the prison, but they tremble at the bar; they are happiest that have joy and boldness at Christ's appearance. When wicked men come like miserable captives, how shall the saints arise out of their graves like sons of the morning,' they and angels intermixed in the train of Christ! What is wanting here is richly made up there. (2.) Walk as those that shall be associated with Christ in judging the world; walk with Christ now, and you shall come with him then: Follow the Lamb wheresoever he goeth.' When he is crowned at Hebron he will not forget his old companions; cleave to him, cry not up a confederacy with them that cry up a confederacy against him. He will say to you, You have been with me in all my sufferings and sorrows, now you shall be with me in my glory, Mat. xix. 27, 28. Again, judge the world now, condemn them by your lives, as knowing that you shall condemn them hereafter by your vote and suffrage. Noah condemned the world,' Heb. xi. 7. A serious Christian is a living reproof; a carnal professing hypocrite justifieth the wicked: Ye have justified your sister Sodom,' see Ezek. xvi.; but a sincere Christian condemneth them.

Obs. 7. From that with ten thousand saints. At Christ's appearance his train shall consist of multitudes of saints and holy angels. Now they are but as two or three berries upon the top of the upper most bough,' scattered here and there as God hath work and service for them to do; but when they appear together in that great rendezvous, they are a number which no man can number;' see Rev. v. 11, and Rev. vii. 9. It is a comfort against the paucity and smallness of those that are upright with God. In heaven we shall have company enough; God's family, when it

cometh altogether, is very numerous, or rather innumerable, Heb. xii. 23. As the wicked shall be exposed to the fellowship of devils, and persons like themselves, where the company shall add to the torment, so shall we be called to a great assembly,' Ps. i. 5, and to bear a part with that glorious train which cometh with Christ.

[148] Vid. Bez. et Estium in loc.

[149] Qu. all'?--ED.

[150] Ka'tharsis ella'mpsis.'--Naz.

Ver. 15. To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are

ungodly amongst them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.

Having described the judge, with his attendants, he cometh to describe his work, which is to convince and execute judgment, together with the persons against whom he will thus proceed, all that are ungodly amongst them: as also the grounds and reasons of the process, because of their ungodly practices and hard speeches against Christ.

Some say the 14th verse doth only contain the prophecy of Enoch, and that these words are the apostle's application or explication of it; but improbably, the words running on in a continued sense or form of speech, and the application is at the 16th verse.

To execute judgment; it is a hysteron proteron; the last act is put first, execution before conviction or arraignment. Upon all, that is, upon all such as are here spoken of, upon all the ungodly; for judgment is not executed upon the saints, but for them. And to convince, elenxai; it implieth such a clear proof that we see it is impossible things should be other wise at the day of judgment; wicked men are speechless,' Mat. xxii., and self-condemned.' All that are ungodly amongst them; that is, amongst the wicked, and the severity of the process is chiefly bent against those that are ungodly. Of all their ungodly deeds; in the Greek, the deeds of their ungodliness.' Now ungodliness here is not taken in its proper sense, for denying God his due honour and worship, but for any opposition against his servants, Worship, truth. Which in an ungodly manner they have committed, hon esebesan; which argueth the malice and spite which they bewrayed in

their oppositions and reproaches. And of all their hard speeches, skleron; hard,' as applicable to things as well as speeches. Our speeches are here intended, as appeareth by the following clause. Wicked practices and an evil tongue are seldom severed; that by hard speeches is meant any proud, taunting, cursed, or contumelious language. See 1 Sam. ii. 3, in the Hebrew, and Ps. xciv. 4, How long shall they utter and speak hard things, and the workers of iniquity boast themselves?' Which ungodly sinners; not only sinners, but ungodly sinners, for the greater emphasis; see Ps. i. 1. Against him; that is, against himself, against his person, or messengers, or truths, ordinances; for what is spoken against any of these is spoken against Christ himself.

This verse is large, and full of points; but because the doctrine of the day of judgment hath been already touched upon, and ungodliness opened at large, ver. 4, therefore the briefer notes will serve the turn.

Obs. 1. Christ's second coming is to judgment; so it is said in the text, He shall come with ten thousand of his saints to execute judgment.' Of his first coming it is said, John iii. 17, God sent not his Son to judge the world, but that the world through him should be saved.' He came not then as a judge, but as a redeemer, offering and procuring grace and life. When we frustrate the end of his coming as a redeemer, we make way for the end of his coming as a judge, and he that then came to us will now come against us.

Obs. 2. When Christ cometh to judgment, one great part of his work will be to convince sinners, and that openly, publicly. Some think that the whole work will be dispatched in the conscience, without any audible and external voice, both as to examination and sentence; others think the trial and conviction shall be in the conscience of a sinner, but

the sentence audibly pronounced; and because the punishment is to light upon the body and the soul, the ear is to receive it as well as the conscience feel it. I conceive that conviction, trial, and sentence will be all open and public. Though I cannot expressly say that every particular sin shall be discovered before the whole world, yet enough manifested to show the sentence just; as their unfaithfulness in their callings, their opposition of God and godliness, their oppression of his servants, their neglect of grace, &c., with all the circumstances and aggravations of it, as the gracious opportunities and means which they have enjoyed, stirring sermons, motions of the Spirit, checks of conscience, blessed methods of love and mercy, &c. God keepeth an account of these things. Those passages which imply God's reckoning with his people in the world are but pledges of what he will do at the day of our last account. Now here God taketh exact notice of the long time and many means which we have enjoyed; as Luke xiii. 7, These three years,' &c. It alludeth to the time of Christ's ministry; he was just then entering upon his last half year, as by a serious harmonising the evangelists will appear: John iv. 54, This second miracle did Jesus in Cana of Galilee;' account is kept of a former: 1 Kings xi. 9, Appeared to him twice;' so these twenty-three years,' Jer. xxv. 3. All this is remembered and produced to convince the sinner.

This conviction implieth two things:--(1.) The opening of the conscience: Rev. xx. 12, The books were opened;' that is, the book of conscience and the book of God's remembrance; the consciences of men shall then be extended to an exact view of all their works and deeds past. It is wonderful, but it shall be done by the mighty power of God; for it is said here, he shall convince them of all their un godly deeds and hard speeches.' Their works and words are not lost and forgotten, but do follow them into the other world, and stand in the view of

conscience, challenging the sinner, Tu nos egisti, opera tua sumus--sinner, these are the things that thou hast done and spoken; we will not leave thee, but bring thee to judgment; see Hosea vii. 2, Ps. xlix. 5. Then is that expression made good, Their iniquities shall find them out,' Num. xxxii. 23. Our old sins and carnal practices were long since forgotten and worn out of memory, so that we think we shall never hear of them more, but there they find us out, and pursue us to Christ's tribunal. (2.) There is an outward publication and manifestation of all these sins, or of most of them, before the world; for the apostle saith, 1 Cor. iv. 5, Hidden things shall be brought to light' in that day; that is, not only called to remembrance by the sinner himself, but exposed to the notice and censure of others, as the context there showeth. So Eccles. xii. 4, it is said, Secret sins shall be brought to judgment.' If only discovered to the conscience of the sinner, they are still kept secret. Wicked men are already in a great measure convinced, yea, and condemned, in their own consciences. It is, then, God's design to shame them before all the world. How otherwise shall the suspected innocency of his servants be vindicated, and saints and angels applaud the equity of his judgments, unless they have some cognisance of the matter for which wicked men are condemned? Now, these sins maybe discovered many ways; either by their own confessions and pitiful complaints extorted from them by the power of God. They shall bewail and bemoan their case thus, probably: Oh! that ever I despised Christ, oppressed his servants, opposed his truth, slighted the seasons of grace,' &c.; see Rev. vi. 16, 17. Or by the sentence of Christ, in the pronouncing of which there is some repetition of their sins, see Mat. xxv. 41-43; and also by the testimony of the good and bad angels against them. The good angels and guardians of the saints are sensible of the injuries done to them, and may possibly accuse you to Christ

upon that score, Mat. xviii. 10. The devil, who is now a tempter, will then be an accuser. One of the fathers bringeth in the devil pleading thus, Domine, sit meus per culpam, qui tuus esse noluit per gratiam, &c.--Lord, let him be mine by sin, who would not be thine by grace. I never died for him, had no heaven to offer him, only a little carnal pleasure or profit, and this was enough to draw him from thee, &c. Yea, further, the ministers and other godly persons, by whose example they have been reproved or condemned, may give testimony against them: John v. 45, There is one that accuseth you, even Moses,' &c. The cries of those whom they have oppressed and wronged may possibly be renewed, James v. 4. Abel's blood may cry out against Cain afresh. Starved souls may cry out against a lazy minister, oppressed subjects against a bloody magistrate, the neglected poor against those that have shut their bowels against them; as, on the other side, the godly poor that have been refreshed and relieved by the bounty of the rich are said to receive them into everlasting habitations,' Luke xvi. 9. Again, the example of those that have had less means may be produced against them, because they went further in a way of compliance with the Lord's purpose, Mat. xii. 41, 42. Others with whom we have sinned may complain of us. Dives was afraid lest his brethren should come into the place of torment,' Luke xvi. 28, which might be a means to increase his anguish, they sinning by his example. I have produced these suppositions only to make the conviction at the day of judgment more intelligible and effective.

Obs. 3. Again observe, when Christ hath convinced, he will condemn, and when he hath condemned, he will execute. Conviction now maketh way many times for conversion, but then for confusion; now God killeth, that he may make alive, but then they are presently transmitted and sent into their everlasting estate. Let us imitate the method of Christ's process

in our judging ourselves; let us examine, judge, execute, not ourselves, but our sins; voluntary acts prevent enforced.

Obs. 4. From that of all their ungodly deeds, &c., observe that the process of the last day chiefly lieth against the ungodly. These are expressly mentioned in the text; unrighteousness is a cause of God's wrath as well as ungodliness, Rom. i. 18. But ungodliness doth chiefly provoke; for the first part, and chiefest part of the law, provideth for our duty to God, ex ordine modum, ex loco statum et dignitatem uniuscujusque prcecepti, [151] &c. The dignity of every command is known by the order of it. Now, in the first place, godliness is required, and then righteousness, or a care of moral duties.

If you would know who are ungodly, see the notes on ver. 4, where they are described at large; all atheists, speculative and practical, pagans, sinners that slight the offers of Christ, that neglect communion with God, and are touched with no reverence and dread of his majesty, all these are ungodly persons, and also all that scoff at religion and holiness of conversation, that despise the ordinances of God, oppress and persecute his servants, hate his truths, these are all in the scripture branded with the same mark, as I could easily show you, if I listed to dilate upon this argument.

Now none of these will be able to hold up the head in the day of judgment: Ps. i. 5, The ungodly shall not stand in judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;' for since they hate or neglect God, how shall they be able to look him in the face, or appear among his servants? They that have despised the mystery of godliness,' 1 Tim. iii. 6, vi. 3, how can they expect the reward of godliness? You that mock at godliness, make duties the objects of your scorn, not your care, how will Christ scorn you at the last day! Well, then, if you would have the day of judgment comfortable to you, be not only just and

strict, but godly, for godliness is a notion distinct from holiness, 2 Peter iii. 11. It is not enough to do actions just and good, but we must do them upon the sight of God's will, and with aims at his glory. Holiness implieth a conformity to the law of God, but godliness an unfeigned respect to his glory. Now a Christian's whole life should have such a tendency and ordination, for it is called a living to God,' Gal. ii. 19.

Obs. 5. Once more observe, these ungodly men are the rather judged because they commit sin with an ungodly mind, or sin with a sinning mind; for so it is in the text, ungodly deeds ungodly committed.' A child of God may fall into wickedness, but he doth not commit it wickedly, with a full consent; men are not condemned for infirmities, but iniquities. As a child of God cannot act with such liberty, purity, and perfection in the ways of God as he doth desire, so in the ways of sin he cannot do what he would, nor be carried out with such a' full bent and purpose of heart as wicked men are, because of the opposition of the new nature. To this latter sense it is said, Gal. v. 17, Ye cannot do the things that ye would,' as will appear by a serious inspection of the context. Wicked men follow the devil's work with all their might: Micah vii. 3, They do evil with both hands earnestly.' The Lord, that is tender of those that sin through infirmity, yet taketh notice to the purpose when men sin for sin's sake, and their hearts are largely and eagerly set upon it; those that are disclaimed at the day of judgment are called workers of iniquity,' Mat. vii. 23, such as make a business and a trade of it. A godly man doth not so much act sin as he suffereth by it, peccatum patitur, non facit (Bernard). He doth not pour out his whole heart this way; there are constant dislikes in the soul, which are a let and restraint to him. Usually the sins of the godly are either sins of ignorance, incogitancy, sudden surreption, and

daily incursion; if they sin deliberately, there is not such a spite and rage as there is to be found in the sins of the wicked.

Obs. 6. From the next clause, and their hard speeches, observe, not only the deeds of ungodly men, but their speeches are brought into judgment. Words do not perish with the breath with which they are uttered; no, they remain upon record, and we are to give an account of them at the last day, Mat. xii. 36, James ii. 12. Men are more serious in their actions, but in their speeches rash and inconsiderate, and those that dare not act evil dare yet speak. Oh! consider, if Christ did only call us to an account for our actions, and our words were free, it were another matter; but he reckoneth with us about our speeches, therefore so speak and so do as those that would be judged by the law of liberty.'

Obs. 7. Once more from thence observe, that of all speeches men's hard speeches' shall be produced at the day of judgment. Now, what are these hard speeches? I answer--Either such as have anger in them, as Solomon speaketh of the froward mouth and perverse lips,' Prov. iv. 24, when men breathe nothing but fire, and drop coals instead of words; or such as have pride in them, or contempt of others, as when we lessen their abilities, insult over their miseries: They speak to the grief of those whom thou hast wounded,' see Ps. lxix. 26; or triumph over their slips and failings; this is to pour salt and vinegar into new wounds.

Again, such as have bitterness and malice in them, as calumnies and reproaches: Ps. lxiv. 3, 4, They bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words.' By whisperings and clancular suggestions they wound the credit of God's servants, and so bring them into disesteem with others. Well, then, be not hasty to utter hard speeches, especially against God's children: Num. xii. 8, Were ye not afraid to speak against my servant, against Moses?' The repetition of these hard

speeches will be sad notes to your ears at the last day.

Obs. 8. The next note is, that of all hard speeches those are the worst which do most directly reflect upon the honour and glory of Christ; for so it is in the text,--hard speeches spoken against him. Now, hard speeches against Christ are either blasphemies against either of his natures;--the Ebionites denied him to be God; the Valentinians made him a fantastical man, or a man only in appearance;--or murmurings against his providence and regimen of the world: Your words have been stout against me,' Mal. iii. 13. When we tax and excuse [152] providence, as if the Lord were blind, careless, unjust, or injurious in his dealings: The Lord shall not see, he shall neither do good nor evil; how should the Most High know?' or when we scoff at his word, as these, Jer. xxiii. 36, The burden of the Lord, the burden of the Lord; every man's word shall be his burden.' Because the prophets usually began their sermons with this preface, The burden of the Lord,' they scoffingly were wont to say, What burden have you for us to day? Now, saith the prophet, this shall return into your bosoms, your words shall be your burden.' So also when we speak against his ways, calling zeal fury, strictness a foolish preciseness, and godliness puritanism. O Christians! these hard speeches will cost dear, here or hereafter. It is possible that blasphemy repented of may be be forgiven, Mat. xii. 31; but when you are brought home to Christ it will cost you bitter pangs and a sound remorse.

Ver. 16. These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own

lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage.

Here the apostle cometh to make application, and to prove that these were such as Enoch had described, and therefore liable to the judgment threatened. Here are several things charged; I shall take them in order:--

The first thing is their unsatisfiedness with their present condition, expressed in two words:--(1.) Murmurers; (2.) Complainers.

The first word, gongustai, signifieth such a muttering as men use when they are under a passion and discontent. The other word, mempsimoiroi, signifieth blamers of their lot and portion; namely, of that portion which is set out for them by God; the one implieth their discontented thoughts, the other their querulous expressions, Note hence:--

Obs. 1. That murmuring is a great sin. It is so charged here upon the seducers. I shall, first, show what murmuring is; secondly, prove that it is a great sin.

First, What it is. One saith well, [153] it must needs be known, because it is so commonly practised; but if you will have me describe it, I shall say, it is the scum of discontent, or the vent of impatience, or such bold expostulations and complaints as flow from an exulcerated mind. In the text, you see first men mutter and then complain; the heart boileth with impatience, and then the froth is cast out in passionate speeches and complaints. Humble complaints are not murmuring, else there would be no room for prayer; but bold expostulations are murmurings, when we complain rather of God than to God, taxing the administration of his providence, as if he dealt too

hardly with us; so that in effect murmuring is an anti-providence, first cherished by repining thoughts, and then vented and uttered in bold and uncomely speeches. Thoughts are audible with God, but it is worse when thoughts are not controlled, but break out openly in words tending to God's dishonour; if the fire be kindled in our bosoms, it is some kind of victory if we smother it, and will not let the sparks fly abroad.

There are several kinds of murmuring--either against men, or against God, though in the issue all be against God, against God about men.

1. Against men, and so either against our equals or superiors.

[1.] Equals, when we murmur because they are admitted to the same privileges with ourselves: see Mat. xx. 11, They murmured against the goodman of the house, saying, These last wrought but one hour.' So Luke xv. 30, This thy son devoured thy living with harlots,' &c. And Beza, of some that reproached him with the sins of his unregenerate condition: Hi homines invident mihi gratiam Divinam--surely these men are angry because God hath showed me mercy. There is an envious nature in man: we would all shine alone, and inclose the common salvation. To upbraid men with late conversion is all one as to make it a crime because they are born but yesterday: it is to take up that filth which God would have covered.

[2.] Against superiors, especially because invested with magistracy or ministry. Some men are of a yokeless, libertine spirit, will acknowledge no other law but their own lusts, as in the text, Murmurers, walking after their own lusts;' think magistracy to be an encroachment upon their freedom, and therefore cannot away with any established order; and as for ministry, that all the Lord's people are holy,' Num. xvi. 3; what need any to be set apart for that work? Thus would they level all things in church and commonwealth, as those rebels

rose up against Moses and Aaron. But though not against the office, we may murmur at the persons that are advanced, as if we would teach God how to govern the world, and whom to lift up and cast down; or else by finding fault with their government without a cause. Some presumptuous persons, that never learned obedience, are always un satisfied. It was observed of Egypt, that it was Loquax et ingeniosa in contumeliam praefectorum provincia; si quis forte vitaverit culpam, contumeliam non effugit. Many such ungoverned spirits there are, that are always traducing public government, especially when it is most faithfully managed, and to the discouragement of opinionists and evil-doers. God will not suffer this evil to go unpunished, Exod. xvi. 8, and 2 Sam. xviii. 7. The calling is his ordinance, the persons are designed by his providence, and the work concerneth his glory; and therefore God taketh himself to be much interested in the quarrel.

2. There is a murmuring which is immediately against God himself. Since the fall man is always quarrelling with his Maker, either against his decrees, or his laws, or his providence.

[1.] Against his decrees. Proud man cannot endure to hear of God's absolute sovereignty; we will do what we will, but we will not give leave to God to do what he will. The good man of the house was fain to plead his right, Mat. xx. 15, Shall I not do with my own?' &c. We can see no reason why God should pass by one and choose another: though we can see no reason, it is enough it is God's pleasure, Mat. xi. 26. God hath his arcana imperil, as well as earthly princes, and we have cause to admire what we cannot understand; things may be just, though his reasons appear not to us; God is not bound to give us an account, or to tell us all his secrets; human reason groweth giddy by prying into the depth of God's decrees. It is good to change disputes into wonder and reverence: Rom. ix. 20, Who art thou, O man, that disputest with God?'

We may chop logic one with another, the potsherds of the earth with the potsherds of the earth, but God's prerogative is above the tribunal of our reason.

[2.] His laws. A proud creature cannot endure to hear of restraints; we could love other things in God, but not his legislative power, Rom. viii. 7; the carnal mind will never stoop, but complaineth of him as harsh and severe, as if he had forbidden us the satisfying of those desires which he hath planted in us. The Israelites murmured thus: the land was a good land, but there were giants and sons of Anak, Num. xiii. 32. The heaven promised is a good heaven, but the way is rough and impassable; duties are difficult, and it is cumbersome to thwart our lusts. The project of carnal nature is to find out an easy and smooth path to eternal happiness: see Ps. cvi. 24, 25, They despised the pleasant land; they believed not his word, but murmured in their tents.' Heaven, figured by the land of Canaan, is not counted worth the pains and difficulty of getting thither.

[3.] His providence. In general, when the wicked prosper, it is a temptation that hath shaken the tallest cedars in Lebanon: David, though afterwards he was ashamed of it, and counts it brutish ignorance, Ps. lxxiii. 22; so Jer. xii. 1-3, and Hab. i. But let us come to temptations that are of a more particular and private experience. We murmur either for what we want, or for what we have lost, or for what we affect.

First, For what we want. As soon as we are straitened we complain presently; this is not so bad as when we murmur out of wantonness. The Israelites, I observe, did fall a-murmuring either out of want, and then they were spared; as for want of waters, Exod. xv. 24; for want of meat, Exod. xvi. 2; want of bread, Num. xx. 3; but at other times out of wantonness. They loathed manna,' must have quails; but then some

special judgment or other broke out upon them. But, however, it is bad enough when our necessities extort these complaints from us: want is a time of praying, not of murmuring. The throne of grace was erected for a time of need,' Heb. iv. 16. But it is man's usual custom to change duties into sins, as admonition into censuring; instead of speaking to men, we speak of men; so in stead of complaining to God, we complain of God, and so make murmuring take the room of prayer. Necessity is a time to put the promises in suit, to try faith, to awaken affections, not to provoke murmurings: I was dumb, and opened not my mouth,' saith David, Ps. xxxix. 9. We may open our mouths in confessions of sin, humble narratives, pleading of promises, but not in self-justifications, stormings against providence, or words of unbelief and impatience; so we must be dumb, and not once open our mouths.

Secondly, For what we have lost. We complain when God taketh away such a child, or such a comfort, or blasteth such a confidence of ours as our affections were much set upon, and in bitterness of heart speak unworthily of God and his dispensations: see 2 Sam. xviii. 33. We hate going back a degree or two, and count it miserable to be once happy, &c. But, O Christians! remember, when anything is lost, it is a wonder all is not gone. Job lost all, and yet blessed God,' Job i. 23.

Abstulit, sed et dedit, [154] He took, but he gave first. That we were once happy showeth we have not always been miserable; our pilgrimage might have been wholly evil and uncomfortable: Shall we receive good and not evil at the hands of the Lord'? Job ii. 10. There is much gone, but somewhat left; that little that is left is more than we have deserved; many in the world would be glad of our relics. Hath he taken aught from us? He might have taken more; he taketh part that giveth all; all is his own, he reserved the property to himself; as much right as we had to our comforts was long since forfeited. If God hath lent us

blessings and demand them again, shall we grudge them to the right owner? It is needful now and then that God should take our comforts from us. When we have gotten a carnal pillow under our heads we are apt to fall into a deep sleep, and dream many a fond dream till God take it from under us. He withdraweth comforts to see how we will take it, and bear up upon our great and everlasting hopes: Heb. x. 34, Ye took joyfully the spoiling of your goods,' &c. You will say that was by martyrdom, but your loss by an ordinary providence; and will not you let God take as willingly as thieves and persecutors? You have the same encouragements, a better and enduring substance.'

Thirdly, For what we affect. We are wont to murmur at the smallness of our portion; we have not so much as others; our condition in the world is not so great, so rich, so honourable as theirs; we have but a single, but they a double, a Benjamin's portion. Oh! but consider this is mere murmuring. God never undertook to maintain all his children at the same rate, and we cannot expect so much. Variety of conditions is necessary for the preservation of the world. Levelling is not God's dispensation. Some must be high and some low. The wise preserver of all things distributeth his gifts variously--wealth to one, skill to another, strength to a third; one must reign, another serve, and all for the common good. A piece of arras is composed of several parcels. We should all famish for company if all were of one sort. Who should endure the handy labours? How low soever thou art, thou art there where God hath set thee, and there thou must tarry till the fair invitation of providence call thee higher. Look backward; thou hast made some increase. Jacob took notice that he was become two droves,' Gen. xxxii. 10, though when he first came into the country he had nothing but his staff in his hand. Many of God's children are not so high as thou art. If you murmur, what should others do that have less? We cast our eyes

forward on those before us, and because we have not so. much as they, so good trading, houses so well furnished, such honour and esteem in the world, all is as nothing. You do not look about you to the thousands that come short of you. You say, Why should not we thrive as they, be preferred as they? Joseph knew why Benjamin had a larger mess, though the rest at the table did not. So doth the Lord know why he giveth to one and not to another.

Secondly, Let me show you the heinousness of the sin by--(1.) The causes of it; (2.) By the injustice of it.

1. The causes of murmuring are many, but ail naught, as--

[1.] Pride and self-love. When men are conceited of themselves, they storm that others are preferred before them. A proud man must needs be discontented, because he sets a high price upon himself; and when others will not come up to his price he is troubled. You will find such a proud thought rising in your heart that men of your worth are not taken notice of, and yet they that deserve least complain and murmur most. The best say, I am not worthy. Real worth is humble. The laden boughs hang their heads; the nettle mounteth when the violet lieth shrouded under its leaves, and is only found out by its own scent. All God's blessings are low to him that is high in his own eyes.

[2.] Impatience. We cannot endure the least inconvenience. Touchy natures would be at ease, tumbling and wallowing in all kinds of pleasure. Therefore, as soon as we are touched in our skins, we fall a-murmuring, Why is this evil befallen me?' and Why should I wait upon the Lord any longer?' An unsubjection of will to God will inevitably put us upon repining.

[3.] Presumption of merit. Where all is of free cost there is no complaining. Men ascribe to themselves when they prescribe to God what he shall do for them, or how bless them. Everything is welcome where

nothing is deserved. If you keep a man of alms, you take it ill that he should not be pleased with his diet. When we look to desert, we may wonder more at what we have than what we want. God would do us no wrong if we were reduced to a less pittance. If in a prison, it is a favour we are not in hell. A malefactor would be glad to commute his punishment, a greater for a less, death for exile, exile for loss of estate, and then the whole for a part. Can a firebrand of hell murmur? There is our desert; but we think God is bound, and that it is a wrong that he taketh no more notice of us: Wherefore have we fasted?' &c., Isa. lviii.; I am not as other men,' &c., Luke xviii.

[4.] Carnal affection. We are too ravenous and greedy upon outward things, [155] and therefore the disappointment breedeth the more vexation. Our desires and hopes of more destroy the memory and consideration of what we have. God giveth sufficiently to satisfy our necessities, and we seek to supply our lusts. Lust is more given to murmuring than necessity. Nature is contented with a little. It is soon satisfied; but lust enlargeth the desire as hell.

[5.] Unbelief and distrust: Ps. cvi. 24, 25, They believed not his word, but murmured in their tents.' Men quarrel with God's providence because they do not believe his promises. Distrust will be sure to breed discontent. It is ill for the present, and they cannot see how it will be better. They could not believe that the wilderness was the way to Canaan, that God can love one whom he corrects, and therefore as soon as they feel the smart of the rod they give vent to their passions.

2. The injustice of it. It is injurious to God, to others, to ourselves.

[1.] It is injurious to God. Murmuring is a sin that pulleth God out of the throne; you enter into judgment' with him; as David, on the other

hand, prayeth, Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord.' Murmurers either deny his providence or tax it. Implicitly they deny it, as if God did not set out to every man his portion. If men did believe that God did govern the world, even as he made the world, why do they not complain of creation as well as providence? We would laugh at him that would murmur because God did not make him an angel or a star. Why! is it not as ridiculous to murmur because God hath made thee a subject and not a prince, a beggar and not a rich man, a servant but not a master, but that they own the hand of God in one and not in the other, as if the world were governed by blind chance? Or else they tax providence of indiscretion or unrighteousness. It is marvellous to see how murmuring robbeth God of all his attributes. It clippeth his sovereignty. We will not let him do with his own as it pleaseth him. The great contest between him and us is, Whose will shall stand, his or ours? It limits his power, and slights it. When God doth not satisfy us we think he cannot, Ps. lxxviii. 20. We set him a task, and if God perform it not, we question his sufficiency. It is a contention with our maker, an entering into the lists with God, as if we could make our party good against him, Ps. lxxviii. 17. We tax his wisdom. Men will be teaching God how to govern the world, for we prescribe to him as if he did not understand what is fit for us. He pleaseth us not in his wisest dispensations, and we bear it out as if we could mend his works: Job xxi. 22, Shall any teach God knowledge, seeing he judgeth those that are high?' They that disallow of God's proceedings take upon them to be God's teachers. It was a blasphemous speech of Alphonsus, Si Deo a consiliis adfuisset in creatione mundi, multa se consultius ordinaturum--if he had been of God's council when he made the world, he would have ordered many things better. Many abhor the blasphemy, and yet think almost to the same effect. If they had the governing of the

world, such men should not prosper, and such and such things should not be done. Thus do we darken counsel with words without knowledge,' Job xxxviii. 2, and cast a reproach of folly and injustice upon God's providence. Again, to his goodness we are injurious, by disvaluing what we have in comparison of what we expect: Mal. i. 2, Wherein hast thou loved us?' as if they had nothing, because not fully what they expected. [156] It is man's nature to forget what is granted, and pitch only upon what is denied, [157] as children in a pet throw away what they have if you do not give them more. Saith Haman, All this availeth me nothing,' &c., Esther v. 13; and the whole kingdom of Israel would not content Ahab when he falleth sick for Naboth's vineyard, 1 Kings xxi. 4. As in the body, if one humour be out of order, or one joint broken, the soundness of all the rest availeth us nothing; a little is enough to set the creature a complaining. His justice also we tax, as if he did defraud us of our due. We think somewhat is due, or else why do we complain? Mat. xx. 13, Friend, I do thee no wrong,' &c.

[2.] It is injurious to others; it puts us upon acts of violence and sedition; the murmurers are called rebels,' Num. xvii. 10. Schism in the church and sedition in the commonwealth are but the fruits of murmuring. Men dislike their own rank and station, and then murmur, and then perturb all. Oh, that I were a judge!' said Absalom, and afterwards breaketh out into open rebellion. Thin exhalations end in great storms. Servants would be masters, and the poor would be rich, and subjects would be in office and power; and by giving vent to their repining thoughts, inflame the zeal of persons likeminded with themselves, till all be embroiled in blood and confusions.

[3.] It is injurious to ourselves. Man is a foolish creature; what doth he get by complaining of God? Who shall right us? Before what tribunal will you put him in suit? Of all sins, murmuring is most unreasonable,

but very pernicious. What do we get by it but disquiet and judgment? It is like spitting against the wind, the drivel is returned upon our own heads. Disquiet it breedeth us. A murmuring spirit is a greater evil than any affliction; like a sour vessel, it turneth all things that are put into it into sourness. Most men's misery ariseth from their discontent; if their heart and their condition were suited, they would do well enough in the world; we trouble our own peace. If we could learn to frame our minds to our estates, as the skilful musician letteth down the strings a peg lower when the tune requireth it, we should pass to heaven more comfortably. Again, it bringeth down judgment; expressions tending to God's dishonour have a loud cry in his ears. Miriam was smitten with leprosy for murmuring, and Dathan and Abiram swallowed up alive; fiery serpents, and plagues, and exclusion out of Canaan were Israel's judgments when they were sick of the fret: see 1 Cor. x. 10, Neither murmur ye, as some of them murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.'

Let us now make application. Beware of murmurings, it is a greater sin than the world taketh it to be. Here I shall speak of two things:--(1.) Murmuring at the times and public changes which have happened amongst us; (2.) Murmuring in our own private case.

First, Murmuring at the times. It is a repining age we live in; many factions are disappointed, and therefore the most are full of discontent, forgetting that all this is the work of a wise God. Mistake me not; I list not to become the times' advocate; it little beseemeth us to be patrons of public miscarriages, or factors for any private interest.

Therefore, let me proceed with the greatest scripture evidence and conviction, and state what is murmuring at the times. It is forbid den, Eccles. vii. 10, Say not thou that the former times were better than

these; for thou dost not inquire wisely concerning this.' Now, what is the sin taxed in this scripture? I answer:--

1. Not godly sorrow, and complaining to God, and bewailing the corruptions of the times. No; the mourners in Sion are marked for preservation, Ezek. ix. None are better friends to public interest. It were well if these doves of the valleys' had more company. This is no sin, for this is the only way of entering our protest, and being free from the corruptions of the age. God hath bound up all politic bodies in the same bundle, and we are concerned in others' sins. It is the art of divine mercy by this means to prevent public ruin, by interesting his people in the welfare of those places where they live, that every man in his place may be sensible of present sins and approaching judgments. Two dry sticks will set a green one a-fire. Can you blame the children of God, then, if they mourn, and enter their protest against the iniquity of the times? The Corinthians were not clear of the incest committed amongst them till they had mourned; then the apostle saith, Now ye are clear in this matter,' 2 Cor. vii. 11. Surely they that are involved in the guilt, concerned in the judgment, had need mourn.

2. Not zeal in public reproof: Isa. lviii. 1, Cry aloud, spare not,' &c. Vitium saeculi is no excuse. If we spare, God will not spare; if we hazard our bodies in bearing our testimony, we save our souls. We must cry out upon sin with a full throat, and that again and again, provided we be clear in our principles and aims, and do it without clamour and popular invectives. When a fire is kindled in a city, we do not say coldly, Yonder is a great fire, I pray God it do no harm. In times of public defection we are not to read tame lectures of contemplative divinity, or fight with ghosts and antiquated errors, but to oppose with all earnestness the growing evils of the world, whatever it cost

us.

3. Nor yet a holy dislike and singularity, standing aloof from public corruptions, as Lot in Sodom, and Noah walked with God in his generations,' Gen. vi. 9. God's children most commonly are forced to walk in a counter motion to the times. Paul, when he had accused the times as evil, adviseth Christians to walk circumspectly,' Eph. v. 16. Worldly wisdom would draw quite another conclusion. The times are bad, let us do as well as we can. There is no living in the world unless we yield a little. The oak is rent to pieces with the fury of the wind when the willow boweth and bendeth. Shall we alone resist such a torrent? Thus would we reason; but the Spirit doth not loosen the reins, but straiten them, upon this consideration, The days are evil,' therefore be circumspect;' that is, be careful to keep close to rule, lest you be blinded and perverted by the subtleties of those that lie in wait to deceive, and elsewhere: Shine as lights in the midst of a perverse generation.' Dead fishes swim with the stream. There is a difference between subjection to God and compliance with men, &c.

But now, positively, what is the fault there reproved? I answer:--

[1.] Foolish murmurings, or such a fond and unthankful admiration of former times that we have not a good word for the present. Tacitus observed it, Vitio malignitatis humanae vetera laudantur, praesentia fastidio sunt. It is a common evil, men are praising past times and declaiming against the present: querulous natures are never pleased, neither full nor fasting. Past temptations are forgotten, and therefore present evils seem worst, and laziness many times occasioneth complaints. Many repine against God because he hath given us our lot in such an age, wherein public contests put us upon the trouble of prayer, discourse, and diligent searching in the mind of God; now usually to excuse other duties we fall a-complaining.

Again, private discontent may exasperate some; things are not suitable to their humours and interests. No wonder if Demetrius and the coppersmiths call those evil times when the gospel is like to get up, because their craft is like to go down, and they are not favoured as they desire. Again sottish carnality may be in the wind; carnal men will extol the happiness of former times, their great hospitality and kind neighbourhood, their honest dealing, and good devotion, what a merry time it was, and how plentiful all things were before the new gospel came in, and they had nothing but mass and matins; as those sots, Jer. xliv. 18, 19. Formalists cry up the goodness of the old religion to disparage times of reformation; so the pagans said that the Roman empire thrived more under false gods than under the Christian religion; wherefore Augustine wrote his book, De Civitate Dei, to answer that charge. Christians, these times may be the worse for those that went before; we may smart for their blood and idols and hatred of the people of God; judgments were then in the causes, as the clouds gather before the rain falleth.

[2.] When we pass over the good, and look only upon the evil; we should counterbalance our afflictions with our mercies: Shall we receive good and not evil at the hands of God?' Job ii. 10. It is railing to gather up the failings of others and not to take notice of their graces; so it is a railing against providence and an ill office to be only like flies pitching upon a sore place. Is there no blessing with all this bad? with our temporal calamities have we not some increase of spiritual privileges, as in the wilderness they had God's presence, though they had a tedious passage of it? The free use of ordinances will countervail all public burdens. Some suppose that Solomon, in that Eccles. vii. 10, alludeth to the people's murmuring in his time; there was a temple building, but the taxes were great, and therefore they

cried The former times were better than these.' See 1 Kings xii. 4.

[3.] When we charge our guilt upon the times. Man is apt to transfer his faults upon others, and obliquely upon God himself: The woman which thou gavest me,' &c.; and so usually the times wherein we live are such, &c. Why, God ordered them, and if you were as you should be, the times could not hurt you. A great deal of fire falleth upon a stone and it burneth not, but a dry chip soon taketh fire. Men think, if they be corrupt, the fault is not theirs, but the times. It is yours certainly; it is bad men make bad times, as I shall show anon.

Let me now give you a few remedies.

(1.) When your hearts storm, look back; there were inconveniences in the wilderness, but a sore bondage in Egypt; a good memory is a help to thankfulness. For my own case, when I am brimful, I consider the times that are past,--see 2 Chron. xv. 3-6--when there was no peace to him that went out or came in;' when private meetings were a conventicle, and in public we could only sigh, not speak; when maypoles and carnal sports were preferred before the Sabbath; when afternoon preaching was suppressed to make way for those sports; when it was a crime to go from a doting service-reader to hear the preaching of the word. Surely they that are so ready to return into Egypt have forgotten their bondage, when their cry came up to God because of the anguish of their souls. Our hard taskmasters,' the domineering prelates, and their oppressing filthy courts, are forgotten, our promiscuous communions, and the flat and cold repetitions of an imposed liturgy quite forgotten; so the confinement of preaching, and the restraint of doctrines; these things are out of feeling, and therefore out of remembrance. One great defect the people of God are troubled withal is a bad memory: Micah. vi. 5, O my people! remember,' &c. I tell you, if we did but remember how we were prelate-bitten, we would not murmur, but give thanks.

(2.) There is nothing new under the sun,' Eccles. i. 7. We say, Is there any sorrow like unto my sorrow?' things never were as they are now. Certainly you do not rightly inquire after this matter; the world is the world still; men have ever had the same principles, the same corruptions, the same temptations; there were Donatists then as well as Separatists now, Pelagians then as well as Arminians now, Arians then as well as Socinians now; all new lights are but old darkness revived, neither new, nor lights. It is easy to parallel what is most odious; there is a circular motion of opinions and fashions, as the sun returneth every year to the same points of his compass.

(3.) All cometh to pass by God's providence; he is the great master of the scenes that present the world with a new stage both of acts and actors: 1 Sam. ii. 7, 8, The Lord maketh poor and maketh rich; he bringeth low, and he lifteth up; he raiseth up the poor from the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among the princes, and make them inherit the crown of glory; for the pillars of the earth are the Lord's, and he hath set the world upon them.' The government of the world is in God's hands, and he casteth down some, and raiseth up others from beggary to sovereignty, from the dunghill to glory. You see there his course is contrary to levelling; he will have some upon the throne of glory. And you see, again, that God hath a hand in all the mutations and changes that fall out in the world, and that these mutations are frequent. The world is tossed to and fro like a ball from hand to hand, that God's sovereignty and dominion over events may the better appear, and that power may not want a bridle, nor the low condition a comfort. Again, that all the kings of the earth do hold their estates of God. Say, then, If God hath set up these persons, let me see what God will do with them.

(4.) The good of times is not to be measured by the carnal quiet of

them. Physic provoketh ill humours; better they should be stirred than lie still and foment a disease. God usually cometh with a fan and a sword: we should not murmur against the sword, because of the benefit of the fan.

(5.) If every one did amend himself, the times would soon amend. Mend thyself and as many as are under thy charge, and mourn for others, and thou hast no cause to complain: Josh. xxiv. 15, I and my house will serve the Lord.' If every one did sweep before his own door, the common filth would be sooner carried away. Usually complainers do least, as the crafty lapwing will go up and down fluttering and crying to draw the fowler from her own nest. We have some secret nest of our own, and we are loath it should be rifled and exposed to public view.

(6.) The worse the times are the more exercise for grace. We have more opportunities of showing love to God than formerly, and zeal for his interests, and industry in finding out the right way. Man is never contented; sometimes we question God's love if we meet with no opposition, and yet we complain when the ways of God are opposed.

(7.) There is an antiperistasis in grace as well as nature. You should be better in bad times, as fountain water is hottest in winter, and fire scaldeth most in frosty weather, or stars shine brightest in the darkest night; see Phil. ii. 15. When the air is infectious we are the more careful of our diet.

(8.) Complaining will not excuse duty; it argueth little faith--is not Christ king? doth not he reign?--little obedience and care of reformation; a gracious heart is most apt to return upon itself. If the times be bad, what have I done to make them better? If not, thou art one that hast made them worse.

(9.) He that is not good in bad times will be naught in better, Isa. xxvi. 10, In the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly.' A sick man

thinketh to have ease in another bed, in another room; carry him thither, his pain continueth. If a carnal man had lived in the prophets' times or the apostles' times, he would be the same as now; see Mat. xxiii. 29, 30. A briar is a briar wherever it groweth; change of times will not do the work without a change of heart. Adam sinned in paradise, the apostate angels in heaven; Lot was unchaste in the mountains, where were none but his own family; in a howling wilderness where they had no outward enticements, the Israelites were given to fleshly lusts.

Secondly, The next part of use is to rebuke murmuring in our own private case. By way of consideration take these helps:--

1. A little is enough; too much is a snare: Luke xii. 15, Man's life consisteth not in the abundance of what he possesseth.' The wants of nature are very few, till lust make it ravenous; a garment too long will soon prove a dirty rag; the greater gates open to the greater temptations and cares; it is a hard lesson, to learn to abound,' Phil, iv. 12. We say such a one would do well to be a, lord or a lady; it is a harder thing than you think it to be. A little sufficeth to keep us till we come to heaven; if we have clothes for warmth, though not for pomp, it is enough. What need a Christian care how, finely dust and ashes be wrapped up, [158] or of what stuff his excrements be made of?

2. God hath a hand in all things,. Ps. xxxix. 9, Isa. xxxviii. 15. God is the party with whom we have to do in sickness or any other trouble; every wheel moveth according to the motion of the first; when we see the hand of God, it is a piece of religious manners to keep silence.

3. God seeth what is fittest for us. If a man should be left to carve out his own portion, he would be his own greatest enemy. None hath more love than God, more wisdom and justice than God; therefore count the present estate best, because it is of his choosing. Should the shepherd

choose the pastures, or the sheep? We are all for the delicacies of pleasure and prosperity;. children think green fruit the best diet because it suiteth with their appetite. What a strange creature would man be if he were what he would be himself! Well, then, let us leave it to God to choose our portion, and to appoint us what part we shall act in the world. Usually we set up a court in our own affections, and enact laws, prescribe to providence, we would have this and we would have that; and when our expectations are not answered we fall a-murmuring. It is very hard to repeal the decrees of our own will; therefore it is good to resign ourselves to the disposal of providence, as David doth, 2 Sam. xv. 26, 27; and to keep our desires low till God's will be declared. It is easier to add than to subtract, and to ascend with providence, when the master of the feast biddeth us to sit higher,' than to be compelled to descend and lie in the dust.

4. If it be bad, it might have been worse, in regard of God's absolute power and our desert. Your sufferings are not so great as your sins: Ezra ix. 13, Thou hast punished us less than we have deserved.' God is too just to do us wrong. If he will exchange hell for Babylon, there is much of mercy in it, nothing of injustice. If you do not deserve this usage from the hands of men, you have deserved this, and much more, from God: it is deserved of God, and therefore to be borne patiently; it is not deserved of men, therefore to be borne cheerfully. Whose cross would we bear, Christ's or the thieves' cross? When we suffer deservedly and as malefactors, we bear the thieves' cross.

5. The Lord disposeth all for the benefit of his own people, so that if it be not good for the present, it will turn to good, Rom. viii. 28. If God should not thus exercise us, we would have more cause to complain. He is too gentle a physician that lets his patient die for want of putting him to the trouble of physic. Consult with God's aim. rather

than your present feeling; let him cut and burn here that he may save hereafter--Domine, hic ure, hic seca, &c.

6. Murmuring is so bad in none as in God's children. It doth not become their privileges, their vows, their hope. God in covenant is theirs, and he hath all things that hath him that made all things: all things are comprised in God. If our lumber be changed into silver, our silver into gold, our gold into one rare pearl, that is all the other virtually. If God hath given us himself, his Christ, his Spirit, will not all this content us? It doth not become our vows, and the promises which thou madest to God when thy terrors were upon thee; then thou didst say, O Lord, let me have Jesus Christ, and I will be content, though I should beg my bread, and be reduced to rags, and extremity of want. When thy heart was stung with sin, thus desirous wert thou to reckon upon Christ as thy all-sufficient portion. How grew the consolations of God to be small' with thee? Job xv. 11. Now God trieth whether thou wilt stand to thy word, and thou fallest a-murmuring: it may be just with God to dip his arrows in venom and vengeance, and shoot them into thy soul again. Once more, it is below your hopes; you should have a spirit as high as heaven, and will you storm at every petty loss? as he said, Art thou the king's son-in-law, and art so lean from day to day?' are you heirs of glory, and stand so much upon trifles? It should -not be.

Having given you some general considerations against murmuring, I now come to particular cases.

1. Dost thou lie under deep pressing wants? Divers have been put to great straits that have done God more glory. Musculus, a great divine, yet forced to serve a weaver for his subsistence; Paul made tents that he might not be burdensome, and so prejudice men against the gospel; the more destitute, the more sensible of the care of providence. God

beareth the purse for us; when we have but from hand to mouth, we are still supplied: the more immediately you live upon God, the more you begin the life of heaven, where God is all in all. Deep poverty is the sauce of the present life. Austin saw a beggar frisking after his belly was filled; he could find no such delight after the use of the creatures, being daily and abundantly supplied. The spectacle much wrought upon him.

2. Hast thou sustained great losses? If God hath lent us blessings, and taken them again, shall we grudge them to the right owner? He took part that gave all.

3. Dost thou endure great pains? There is a gradation in miseries; those that light upon the estate do not sit so close as those that light upon the body, and those that light upon the body are not so terrible as those that light upon the soul: A wounded spirit, who can bear?' Bodily pains is the case we now speak to: you are full of pains, but Christ on the cross suffered more; but he was God-man. The martyrs suffered more, Heb. xi. 35: they were tortured, etumpani'sthesan--they were stretched out like a drum; but those were rare instances, and had a singular assistance. Paul's was an ordinary case; his thorn in the flesh,' 2 Cor. xii., was some great bodily pain; but Paul was a choice spirit: heathens have borne it stoutly. Epicurus was full of solace in a fit of the colic, ob memoriam inventorum, by calling to mind his inventions in philosophy; and Tully speaketh of Possidonius the philosopher, that whilst he was under a great fit of the stone, could discourse freely that nothing was good but virtue, nothing evil but vice; and when his pain twinged him, would say, Nihil agis, dolor! quamvis sis molestus, nunquam confitebor te esse malum--pain, thou dost nothing alter my opinion; though thou art troublesome, yet thou art not evil. But these were men that obsti nately maintained an

insensibleness. Little children have endured great pains, and wilt thou startle at that which poor little children have suffered? Besides all this, it is God's design to try you. There is a great deal of valour to be showed in the sick-bed: [159] either the end of it will be life or death: if death, it is the last brunt, bear it patiently: Those enemies which ye now see, ye shall see them no more,' Exod. xiv. 13; heaven will make amends for all: if life, you will be ashamed, when well, that you had no more patience whilst sick. Passive valour is the glory of a Christian; active valour, that is fomented with plenty of blood and spirits, is a poor thing to it. Great soldiers, that will venture upon the mouth of a cannon, yet tremble at a disease and lingering death; when they are sick they are under God's arrest, &c.

Thus I have given you remedies against murmuring by way of consideration: now by way of practice.

1. Divert the stream another way. As to the disposition of heart, take this rule: Be still examining thyself rather than judging God, Ps. iv. 4. If God seemeth to neglect me, have not I neglected him? &c. As to the outward expression of murmuring, turn the streams again; express thy sorrows often in a way of prayer, thy rejoicings in a way of praise. Prayer cureth murmuring, for that is a duty wherein we profess subjection and dependence: and besides, utterance giveth ease to the soul: an oven stopped is the more hot within; complain more to God, and we shall not complain of God. Praise cureth murmuring, Job i. 23; as long as we can give thanks, we will not be querulous: but when we are disdainful of blessings, and we say, What! no more? Mal. i. 2, the distemper is getting ground upon the soul.

2. Affect rather to be good than great. None murmur because of the smallness of grace; that is not their complaint; but because of the lowness of their condition in the world. A man that looketh after the

increase of grace, he can bless God for his outward decays, 2 Cor. iv. 16, and look upon murmurings as worse than pains or losses; those are afflictions, these are sins. So much for the first crime charged.

The next part of their character is walking after their own lusts. This is fitly subjoined to the former, for lusts make men fro ward and hard to be pleased, and the persons here described were exact libertines, making their lusts their rule and their law; yea, the most brutish of all lusts, the lusts of the flesh; and therefore in Peter it is, 2 Peter ii. 10, That walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness.' How portentious they were for impurities in this kind we told you before. Their walking after their lusts implieth their giving up themselves to such a course, contrary to all fear of God, care of laws, or restraint of nature.

The point is, that it is an argument of ungodliness when men walk after their own lusts. The apostle, applying the prophecy of Enoch against ungodly men, bringeth this as a part of the charge, that they walk after their own lusts.' I shall inquire:--

1. What lusts are?

2. What it is to walk after their own lusts?

3. Prove it to be a note of ungodliness.

First, What lusts are? This I have answered elsewhere; see my commentary on James i. 14. For the present, let it suffice to note, that lust is either original or actual.

1. It signifieth our original proneness to all that is evil, James i. 14.

2. Actual lust, so it signifieth any evil motion of the heart that swerveth from the law of God, more especially our inordinate desires and inclinations to pleasures, honours, or profit. Sometimes they are called fleshly lusts,' 1 Peter ii. 11, as carrying us out to the

satisfaction of our bodily and brutish appetites; sometimes worldly lusts,' Titus ii. 12, because they are stirred by worldly objects. Lusts are the fever of the soul, unnatural heats, transgressing the laws of reason and bounds of religion.

Secondly, What doth this walking imply? It is elsewhere expressed by serving divers lusts and pleasures,' Titus iii. 3, and by fulfilling the desires of the flesh and the mind,' Eph. ii. 3. It noteth:--

1. A willing subjection to lust as a law or as a master, The one is implied in walking after our lusts,' the other in serving our lusts,' when men do as they please, and let their sensual heart give law to the whole man. A child of God may be overcome by his lusts, but he doth not walk after them, or serve them; he may be foiled, but he doth not give over the combat, and is still resisting, striving, praying, calling in the help of the Spirit; his soul suffereth a rape by lust, there is not a plenary consent on his part.

2. Customary practice and observance. Walking is a progressive motion, and so implieth men's course and the tenor of their lives. A child of God his walking is in the Spirit, Gal. v. 16, and doth not fulfil the lusts of the flesh; but it is a wicked man's work and employment.

3. A fond indulgence; they are so far from thwarting lusts, that they provide, contrive for them: Rom. xiii. 14, Make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.' They nourish their hearts, fondle lust, and make a wanton of it; they do not crucify it, and set up a course of mortification against it.

Thirdly, This is a note of unregeneracy, or a state of ungodliness. The apostle describeth the natural state by this serving,' Titus iii. 3; and this fulfilling,' Eph. ii. 3; and when the Holy Ghost doth deride the pride and folly of young men in giving themselves up to a course of lust and vanity, he saith, Go, walk in the way of thine own heart,'

Eccles. xi. 9; and the negative or privative work of regeneration is called a putting off the old man with his deceitful lusts,' Eph. iv. 22, and it standeth with good reason:--

1. Because they that walk after their lusts seek to cherish that which Christ came to destroy, and so go about to defeat the Redeemer, and to hinder him from obtaining his purpose in their hearts. Christ came to destroy the works of the devil,' 1 John iii. 8, i'na lu'se, to untie and loosen those cords of vanity wherewith Satan hath bound us. The works of the devil are lusts, which are of his inspiring and cherishing: John viii.44, Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do.' Now when Christ cometh to loose these cords, carnal men tie them the faster, and therefore certainly are to be reckoned to the devil, and not unto God. Every degree of service done to Satan is an act of treason and disloyalty to Christ; therefore, when men make it their work to fulfil their lust, they renounce all allegiance to Christ.

2. They that walk after their lusts have not taken the rule of the new creature upon them. The new man hath another master and another rule; the renewed soul is not governed by lust, but by the law of God, Gal. vi. 16. If we have not changed our rule, it is a sign we have not changed our master.

3. They that walk after their lusts never felt the power of grace, for the grace of God teacheth us to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts,' Titus ii. 11, 12. How doth it teach us? I answer--(1.) Partly by diversion, by acquainting us with better things in Christ: Rom. xiii. 14, Put ye on the Lord Jesus, and make not provision for the lusts of the flesh.' Love cannot lie idle in the soul, the mind of man must have some oblectation and delight; either love runneth out in lust or in respects to God, either to heavenly or worldly things. When we

only savour the things of the flesh, it is a sign we never tasted how sweet God is in Christ. (2.) Partly by way of help and supply; it planteth opposite principles, and makes use of an opposite power; it plants opposite principles, a new nature that hath new desires and delights, 2 Peter i. 4, and maketh use of an opposite power, which is the Spirit of God, Rom. viii. 13. (3.) Partly by way of argument. Grace out-pleadeth lust; it urgeth the unsuitableness of it to our condition. See Rom. xiii. 13; 1 Peter iv. 3, i. 14; Rom. vi. 2. To our vows; baptism implieth a renunciation of sins, 1 Peter iii. 21. It is an answer to God's demands: Credis?--Credo. Abrenuncias?--Abrenuncio. Spondes?--Spondeo. Therefore he that liveth under the full power of lust hath forgotten his baptismal vows, 2 Peter i. 8, for gotten that he was purged from his old sins.' It pleadeth also the unsuitableness of it to our hopes, 1 Peter ii. 11. We are passing on to another country, where we shall enjoy a pure and sinless estate.

Let us now apply the point:--

Use 1. It dissuadeth us from walking after our own lusts. You that are Christians should deny them, and not gratify them, otherwise you renounce your allegiance to God. Lust sets up another lord, and maketh us stand in defiance of the God that made us; his laws call for one thing, and your lusts crave another. God saith, Put off the old man with his deceitful lusts,' and you say, We will keep them. Can they be good subjects that live in defiance of their sovereign's laws? If a prince should send a message to a city not to harbour such and such traitors, but to search them out, and bring them to condign punishment; if they never look after them, yea, are angry with those that discover them, it argueth they do inhaunt with traitors, and are enemies to their prince. We are often warned in God's name to look to our sinful lusts, to put them away; and we go home and never regard it, nay, are

angry with those that grate upon the conscience: Herod would not have his Herodias touched. We take it heinously when the word beareth hard upon our hearts; what do we but show ourselves traitors to the crown of heaven?

2. Otherwise you renounce your interest in Christ: Gal. v. 24, They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts thereof He doth not say they are Christ's that take up this opinion and naked belief that he was crucified, or died for sinners, but they are Christ's that feel that he was crucified, that, by the virtue of his cross, do crucify their own lusts and sinful affections. What! a Christian, and yet worldly! a Christian, and yet sensual! a Christian, and yet proud! You that are given to pleasures, do you believe in Christ that was a man of sorrow? You that are carried after the pomp and vanity of the world, do you believe in Christ, whose kingdom was not of this world'? You that are proud and lofty, do you profess an interest in Christ, who said, Learn of me, for I am humble and lowly'? It is in vain for you to talk of his dying for sinners, and boasting of his cross, when you never felt the virtue of it, Gal. vi. 14. What experience have you that his cross was the cross of the Son of God, when your hearts linger as inordinately after carnal things as ever? Have you got anything by it? Do you feel any weakening of lusts? any decay of sin? Are you planted into the efficacy of his death'? Rom. vi. 5. If not, how can you glory in the cross of Christ?

3. Otherwise you are not acquainted with the Spirit; his work is to mortify lusts, Rom. viii. 13, and they that are after the flesh do savour of the things of the flesh; and they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.' Rom. viii. 5. After whom do ye walk? After your own lusts, or after the Spirit of God?

4. God doth not only require you in point of sovereignty to put away

your lusts, but also pleadeth with you upon terms of grace: Titus ii. 11, 12, The grace of God that bringeth salvation, teacheth you to deny worldly lusts.' Grace hath denied us nothing, it hath given us Christ, and all things with him; and shall we stick at our lusts, that are not worth the keeping? Nature is much addicted to these lusts, but surely God loves Christ much more than we love the world; his love is infinite and unlimited, like his essence, yet God gave up the Son of his love. Grace counteth nothing too dear for us, not the blood of Christ, the joys of heaven; and shall we count anything too dear to part with for grace's sake? God forbid! A right eye,' and a right hand,' Mat. v. 29, cannot be so dear to us as Christ was to God. What a cost hath grace been at to redeem us and save us! and shall grace be at all this cost for nothing? If God had commanded us a greater thing, ought we not to have done it? If to give the body to be burned,' to offer the first-born for the sin of the soul'? Considering his absolute right over the creature, he might have required thy life, and thy children's life, but he only requireth thy lusts, things not worth the keeping, the bane of the soul, a bad inmate, which, if we know its pestilent influence, we needed no more arguments to turn out of doors. Thy lusts God requireth; things we are bound to part with, to preserve the integrity and perfection of our natures, if God had never dealt with us in a way of grace. But how shall grace plead in vain when it presseth to deny lusts? It will be the shame and horror of the damned to all eternity that they have stood with God for a trifle, that they would not part with dung for gold, with a little brutish contentment for the consolations of the Spirit, especially when grace, which hath so deeply pre-engaged us, pleadeth for it.

5. Consider what lust is; it is the disease of the soul. Natural desire is like the calor vitalis--the vital heat; but lust is like a feverish

heat, that oppresseth nature. We should get rid of it as we would of a disease; the satisfaction of it is sweet to carnal nature, so is drink to a man in a fever. Who would desire a fever to relish his drink? Better be without the disease than enjoy the pleasure of the satisfaction; better mortify lust than satisfy it; in the issue it will be sweeter. I am sure the pains of mortification will not be so bitter as the horrors of everlasting darkness. Lust let alone beginneth our hell; it is a burning heat that at length breaketh out into everlasting flames. Again, lust is the disorder of nature: as it is monstrous in the body if the head be there where the feet should be, and the feet there where the head should be; such a deordination is there in the soul when the affections carry it; and when reason should be in dominion, we suffer lust to take the throne. Man rightly constituted, his actions are governed in this manner: the understanding and conscience prescribe to the will; the will, according to right reason and conscience, moveth the affections; the affections, according to the command and counsel of the will, move the bodily spirits and members of the body; but by corruption there is a manifest inversion and change; pleasures affect the senses, the senses corrupt the fantasy, the fantasy moveth the bodily spirits, they the affections, and by their violence and inclination the will is enslaved, and the mind blinded, and so man is carried headlong to his own destruction. Now, shall we cherish these lusts and brutish appetites? The Lord forbid!

6. It is lusts that hinder the peace of the world, our own peace. How quietly and happily would men live if they were more mortified! Men desire more than they have, and so are made poor, not by want so much as desire. He that expects little is soon satisfied. It is our own passions that raise a storm in the soul. A man that is vile and little in his own eyes, when others contemn and slight him, they do but ratify

his private opinion of himself; and who can be angry with others because they are of the same judgment with ourselves? Take away the lust and the trouble ceaseth. What need Haman be troubled that Mordecai did not bow the knee, but that he looked for it? Nay, lusts trouble our peace of conscience. Lusts let alone end in gross sins, and gross sins in desperation. Love of pleasures, if uncontrolled, will end in drunkenness, or adultery; and envy, in murder and violence. Sins unchecked grow licentious and unruly. Judas allowed his covetousness, and it brought him to betray his Master, and that brought him to the halter. Gehazi was first blasted with covetousness, and then with leprosy, and so became a burden to himself; Ananias and Sapphira, taken off by a sudden judgment. The devil loveth by lust to bring us to sin, and by sin to shame, and by shame to horror and despair; so that, if we walk after our lusts, it proveth a sad walk in the issue. Again, it disturbeth our peace with others. These libertines were yokeless, and could not endure restraints, because wedded to their own lusts. It is not opinions divide the world so much as lusts and interests.

7. The more you walk after your lusts, the more you may. They are not quenched when they are satisfied, but increased rather, as the fire is, by laying on new fuel; the distemper groweth every day, till you are quite enslaved: Given to much wine,' Titus i. 7, ii. 3; it is dedoulome'nas, enslaved to wine,' in the Greek. In this sense we are said to be brought under the power of the creature, 1 Cor. vi. 12; so that whatever shame or loss ensueth, you cannot leave your lusts: Jer. xviii. 12, There is no hope,' &c.; they see it is bad, and cannot see how it should be otherwise.

8. What can we get by sin but a little pleasure? Titus iii. 3, Serving divers lusts and pleasures.' This is the great sorceress that enchants the whole world, the root of all sin; they loved pleasures more than

God,' 2 Tim. iii. 4. It is not imaginable that an intelligent creature should rest in his own actions; we aim at somewhat in walking after our own lusts; if we balk that which is honest, it must be profit or pleasure. Now, that a man should enslave himself for ever, and that for a little pleasure, which is base in itself, and lost as soon as enjoyed, is monstrous and absurd. Breve est quod delectat, aeternum quod cruciat--the pleasure is but short, vanishing, but the pain is for ever. And will you for a thing of nought break with God, and forfeit your immortal souls? Oh! let it not be.

Let all this now persuade you to deny your lusts, rather than to feed and cherish them, to renounce them, and not to walk after them. There are three degrees of this denial:--(1.) They must be prevented, and kept from rising; (2.) Suppressed and kept from growth; (3.) We must not accomplish them, and if they gain consent, keep them, from execution. Suitable to which three degrees there are three duties:--(1st.) Mortification, that we may prevent them. (2d.) Watchfulness, that we may suppress them; (3d.) Resolution, that we may not accomplish them.

1. To begin with the top and highest degree, to prevent the lust: 1 Peter ii. 11, Abstain from fleshly lusts.' It is not enough to abstain from acts of sin, but we must abstain from lusts; yea, the root must be deadened: Gal. v. 24, Crucify the flesh.' She is chaste that checketh an unclean solicitation, but she is more worthy of praise whose grave carriage forbiddeth all assaults and attempts in that kind; so should we be so mortified as to prevent a temptation, not to have a lust stirring. But because this cannot always be--

2. The next degree is, timely to suppress them, laus est aliqua in secundis stare--to conquer lust when we cannot curb it, and wholly keep it under. Dash Babylon's brats against the stones, and take the little

foxes; smother it in the conception, James i. 15. It is a great sin to quench the Spirit's motion, so it is a great neglect not to take notice of the first thoughts and risings of sin; the little sticks kindle first, and set the great ones on fire; crush the cockatrice in the egg. The flesh riseth up in arms against every graceful motion; so should the spirit, the better part, against every sinful motion, Gal. v. 17. Chide away your carnal thoughts, and let them not find harbour. If the envious man throw weeds over the garden wall, the gardener will not let them root there. If Satan cast in thoughts, cast them out again with indignation.

3. Let not. worldly lusts be put in execution. If thou hast neglected the mortification and deadening of the affections, if sin hath got the start of thee, and gained a consent, yet at least restrain the practice: James i. 15, Lust, when it hath conceived, bringeth forth sin,' that is, an external sinful action; there are works of the flesh,' that follow the lusts of the flesh,' Gal. v. 19. It is good to stop at lust; though the lust grieveth the Spirit of God, yet the work, besides the grief, bringeth dishonour to God, giveth an ill example, bringeth scandal to religion, maketh way for a habit and further proneness to sin; therefore if thou hast not prevented the lust, act not the sin: Micah ii. 1, 2, Woe be to them that devise evil upon their beds, and when the morning is light, they practise it.' It is naught to harbour the motion, to plot and muse upon sin, but it is worse to practise it, for every act strengthens the inclination; as a brand that hath been once in the fire is more ready to burn again. If the devil have kindled a fire in thy bosom, let not the sparks fly abroad, but keep the temptation within doors, lest thou more betray thyself into Satan's hands.

The third clause in this application of Enoch's prophecy is, that their

mouth speaketh great swelling words. In Enoch's prophecy not only unholy deeds are noted, but hard speeches. These Gnostics were faulty both ways, both in word and deed; that which is charged here is a fault in their speech. It is said, Dan. xi. 36, The king shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods,' In the Septuagint the same phrase is used that is here, kai` o basileu`s upsothe'setai kai` megalunthe'setai epi` pa'nta theo`n, kai` lale'sei uperonka, and so possibly it may imply their blasphemies against God, a crime of which these wretches were guilty, in exalting Simon Magus above the true God. Or else these swelling words' may relate to their boasting of their own knowledge, from whence they were called Gnostics; and Tertullian saith of them, Omnes tument, omnes scientiam pollicentur; ipsae mulieres haereticae, quam sunt procaces!--they all swell with pride, and make ostentation of deeper knowledge; their very women, how conceited are they! Or else it may signify their proud censures of others, their scorning of the guides of the church, as it is said of some: Ps. lxxiii. 9, They speak loftily, they set their mouth against the heavens, their tongue walketh through the earth.' They took a liberty to speak of all things and persons at pleasure, without any restraint, which was and is the very genius of these and other seducers. Bather, I suppose, though not excluding the other senses, these swelling words relate to their phraseology and unsavoury gibberish which they used in representing their opinions. Peter calleth them swelling words of vanity,' 2 Peter ii. 18. The note hence is this:--

Obs. 3. That the pride and vanity of seducers is usually bewrayed in the fondness and affectedness of their expressions. The affected language of the Gnostics and Valentinians may be seen in Irenaeus; and how much this pattern hath been improved by men of a fanatical spirit, may be found in those that have written of the heresies of succeeding

ages. Jerome taxeth Jovinian with his swelling words. [160] In times more modern, Swinkfield was observed to be always talking of illumination, deification, &c.; and the familists' cant is not unknown, of being godded with God, and christed with Christ. So Jacob Behmen's greening of the inward root, &c.; and Calvin saith of the libertines of his time, communi sermone spreto, exoticum nescio quid idioma sibi fingunt, interea nihil spirituale afferunt, they pretend to matter more spiritual, and when all cometh to all, it is but noisome errors disguised, or common things represented in uncouth forms of speech, which the scriptures own not, rational and truly spiritual men understand not. The same unsavoury and unintelligible forms of speech may be observed in a wicked book lately put forth by a knight of this country, called The Retired Man's Meditations,' wherein the highest principles of our most holy faith are endeavoured to be undermined by this artifice of covert and affected speech; but that by the providence of God the book fell under neglect and scorn presently upon the publication. Now the reason of this affectation is, I suppose, to amuse the reader with the pretence of mystery and depths, Rev. ii. 24, that, despising the simplicity of the word, and the common and avowed principles, he may be the more pliable to their carnal fancies, which, if nakedly exposed at first, would have nothing of allurement and temptation in them to any well-disposed minds. Well, then, be not rapt into admiration with novel and conceited expressions, nor troubled with oppositions of science falsely so called,' 1 Tim. vi. 20. This is the devil's device, first to maze people, as birds are with a light and a bell in the night, and then to drive them into the net. If you would keep to wholesome doctrine, keep to a form of wholesome words, and do not place religion in conceited speaking; a holy dialect I know becometh saints, but an affected phraseology is one of Satan's lures,

and a means to corrupt many.

The fourth clause is, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage. Junius applieth this to those that set up angels, and unknown names and persons in the church, instead of Christ; but I think it is rather to be applied to men. Person is therefore put for the outward state and appearance, in which sense it is said, Thou shalt have no respect of persons in judgment,' that is, of their outward condition and estate. Accepting of persons, as Gen. xix. 21, is rendered in the Septuagint by thauma'zein to` pro'sopon, [161] wondering at a man's face or outside, as being overcome and dazzled at the splendour of it. Accordingly our apostle saith here, Having men's persons in admiration.' Now this they did for advantage,' that is, either to gain men to their party, by crying them up as holy and knowing, to the contempt of others who were more valuable for the sincerity of their religion; or else for worldly profit's sake, those whom they feared, or from whom they expected any worldly profit, as the rich and powerful, upon these would they fawn, and with these in a servile manner in sinuate themselves, commending their actions and magnifying their persons.

Having been so long in the former part of the verse, I shall but mention the notes here,

Obs. 4. None so fawning and base-spirited as the proud for their advantage: these spoke swelling words and yet basely crouched for profit's sake. Ambrose noteth it of a spirit of ambition: Ut dominetur aliis, prius servit; curvatur obsequio, ut honore donetur--none stoop so as they that have a mind to rise. One observed of our late prelates, [162] that they were willing to take Ham's curse upon them, to domineer in the tents of Shem, that is, would be servants of servants,' slaves to great men's servants, that they might lord it over God's heritage.

Men of proud insulting spirits bow low for their own ends. As Absalom courteth the people to jostle his father out of the throne, 2 Sam. xv. 2-5. And Tacitus observeth the like of Otho, that he did projicere oscula, adorare vulgus, et omnia serviliter pro imperio--adore the people, kiss the meanest, basely dispense his courtesy to the vilest, all to further his designs upon the empire. So Ammianus Marcellinus, lib. xxv., observeth the same of Julian, that out of affectation of popularity he delighted to converse with the meanest of the people. Certainly a proud spirit is no great spirit, no more than a swollen arm can be accounted big.

Obs. 5. Having men's persons in admiration for advantage is a sin. We may admire the gifts of God in others so as to praise the giver, but not so as to be guilty of anthropolatry, or man-worship, 1 Cor. iii. 21; not so as to despise others,' who have their usefulness, and it may be as excellent a gift in another kind, 1 Cor. xii. 7-11; not so as to promote our interests thereby, this is servile flattery, condemned in the text and Hosea vii. 8; not so as to be afraid to tell them their own, or for their fear or favour to wrest the truth of God: Matt. xxii. 16, Thou teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man, for thou regardest not the person of men.' Let all regard this, especially the ministers of Christ.

Obs. 6. That seducers are apt to insinuate with great persons and men of power and interest, that having their ear and countenance, they may engage them against the truth. Having not truth of their side, they use the more craft; as the ivy, not being able to support itself, twineth about the oak till it sucketh out its heart. God's messengers carry it more openly, and with a single plainness; see 2 Cor. i. 12. Creepers and fawning parasites do but draw a suspicion upon themselves. Surely God's cause is able to stand upon its own legs, and needeth not the

support of so base an artifice.

Quest. But is it not lawful to use some prudence in this kind, and to insinuate with great men for the advantage of a good cause?

Ans. To be over solicitous in this kind argueth distrust of God's providence, and draweth suspicion upon the way which we would needs maintain: that matter is not very combustible where men blow so hard. What favour cometh in the fair way of God's providence we may accept: All men seek the ruler's face, but every man's judgment is of the Lord;' and what may be gotten by honest, open, and lawful means, as by humble addresses, and the magnetic virtue of truth itself, and the holiness of them that maintain it, may be sought after. Thus the apostles dealt with the rulers and great ones, to gain their respect to Christianity, that they might with less prejudice in sinuate the truth to the people, Acts xviii. 8, and xix. 31. Some of the chief of Asia' were friends to Paul. But, now, when this respect is to be gotten by clancular and dishonest arts, and cannot be kept without flattering them in their sins, or compliance with their lusts and carnal designs, and men stretch their consciences, and make it their business to humour those that they may advance them, and trample upon all that may be called right and honesty to accomplish their ends, and magnify those whom they would have scorned if their station had not been so high,--this is to have men's persons in admiration for advantage.'

Obs. 7. Usually men of a false way in religion admire those of their own party above others of known worth and integrity. This is one part of the sense. All of their own way they accounted Gnostics, that is, knowing persons; as if others, how much soever owned by God, as having the stamp and impress of gifts and graces upon them, were not to be compared with them. This is the genius of all sectaries: illic ipsum esse est promereri, saith Tertullian, it is religion enough to be one

of them.

[153] Dr Sibbes.

[154] Seneca.

[155] Quod enixè concupiscunt ut sit, contabescunt quod esse non possit.'--Gilbert, in Cant. xix.

[156] Quantumlibet saepe obligati hoc solum memineruut quod negatum est.'--Plin., Ep. iv., lib. 3.

[157] Non quod habet numerat, tantum quod non habet optat.'--Manil.

[158] Qui Christum cui at non multum carat quam de preciosis cibis stercus conficiat.'--Hierom.

[159] Virtus etiam lecto exhibetur.'

[160] Descripsit Apostolus Jovinianum loquentem buccis tumentibus et inflata verba trutinantem.'--Hieron. adversus Jovin., lib. i.

[161] Nasliati panecha, the word signifieth, I have accepted thy face,' or lifted up thy face;' the Septuagint renders ethau'masa to` pro'sopon, See, I have accepted thee concerning this thing.'

[162] Dr Jackson in his Treatise of Faith.'

Ver. 17. But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before

of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Having described these seducers, he exhorteth those to whom he wrote to beware of them, alleging the warning of the apostles, to show that not only Enoch, who might be supposed to speak of the wicked men of his own time, but the apostles, who expressly spake of the present age, foretold that scoffers and sons of Belial should arise in the church.

There is nothing difficult in this verse, only a doubt is to be discussed. Doth not this passage yield an argument against the authority of this epistle? He speaketh of apostles,' and of words spoken before' by them, rhematon ton proeiremenon, as if he were of an inferior orb, and written long after their publication of the word. I answer--No. For (1.) Peter maketh mention of the epistles of Paul, yet it doth not weaken his authority, 2 Peter iii. 15, 16. (2.) In the place exactly parallel to this, 2 Peter iii. 2, 3, that apostle citeth other writings, yet avoweth his apostolical authority, Be mindful of the words spoken before by the holy prophets, and the commandment of us, the apostles of Jesus Christ,' (3.) This term, before spoken of, only showeth that he wrote late, when either the apostles were dead, or their writings were common in the church.

But why doth he quote the words of the apostles, neither urging his own authority, nor including himself, as Peter doth? I answer--(1.) Partly out of modesty, to point at the place whence he had taken these things, and to show that he was not ashamed to use and allege the writings of his fellow apostles. (2.) To declare their mutual consent: In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established.' (3.) His

own authority is employed in vouching theirs, and before expressed, when he calleth himself the brother of James.'

Notes from this verse are these:--

Obs. 1. From that beloved; which compellation is used to note his affection in this writing: the like is used by Peter, 2 Peter iii. 1, Beloved, I thought meet,' &c. When we declaim against errors, we should do it out of love and a tender respect to the good of souls. In all contests we had need watch our own hearts. People suspect us to act out of peevishness and sinister affections, to serve a sect and party, and our engagement to be faction, not zeal; therefore, be the more careful that the flame be pure; incense must not be kindled with strange fire, nor zealous engagements arise from a carnal impulse.

Obs. 2. Again, we may be earnest against error when corrupt men are gotten into esteem; but it is in love to you, if we express ourselves with some warmth and affection; it is for God, and your souls are concerned. It is observable, John, the disciple of love, is most earnest against deceivers: Bid them not God-speed,' saith he, 2 John 7-10; and everywhere in his epistles, My little children, believe not every spirit,' &c.;' there are many antichrist--men that lie and have not the truth.' It is sad your ministers should be looked upon as enemies because they love you and warn you. But you will say it is out of perverseness, to serve their faction, and to cast an odium upon parties opposite to themselves. I answer--Charity thinketh no evil;' we should not interpret the worst; those that storm at a warning give a shrewd presumption of their own guilt. Usually persons that object thus are such as would have us tamely suffer the honour and interest of our Lord and Master Jesus Christ to be trampled under foot; but it is our heart's desire that tender consciences may know that it is not the shame of others, but their good, which we aim at.

Obs. 3. From that remember. Seasonable remembrance of truths is a great help and relief to the soul: John ii. 22, When he was risen from the dead, the disciples remembered,' &c. In events it is good to remember prophecies; they confirm the soul, and support it against the present distress and temptation; both sins and discomforts arise from forgetfulness mostly and want of actual remembrance: Have ye forgotten?' Heb. xii. 5. But now, when the Spirit is ready with the remedy, as the flesh is with the temptations, it is a mighty support. In the debates between the carnal and spiritual part, seasonable thoughts carry it. I do not say bare thoughts do it, unless God be iu them; there may be gracious disallowing thoughts, and yet the flesh go away with the victory for all that; but this is the way by which the Spirit of God worketh by fresh and seasonable thoughts; he poiseth the heart, and inclineth it to the better side. Well, then, let your memories be as an ark or chest, in which the tables are kept. Lay up a good stock of knowledge, that you may have truths always fresh and present with you: they will be a help to prayer, Eph. vi. 17, 18, Take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, praying always,' &c.; a check to temptations to sin, Ps. cxix. 9, I have hid thy word in my heart, that I might not sin against thee;' a support in afflictions, Heb. xii. 5; a remedy against error, John xiv. 26.

Obs. 4. The next clause is the words spoken before. The prophecies of scripture evince the truth of it; things are there spoken long before they fall out; not only before the event, but before the causes or remote tendencies to such an event. Wise men may guess when they see probabilities, and foretell that which dependeth on natural causes; the devil can many times shrewdly interpret the predictions of the word; but a certain prescience of what is future, and merely in itself contingent, is the prerogative of God: Isa. xli. 22, Let them foretell

things to come,' &c. This is done in the scripture. Cyrus is mentioned by name a hundred years before he was born, Isa. xlv. 1; the birth of Josiah three hundred years before it came to pass, 1 Kings xiii. 2; the building of Jericho five hundred years before it was re-edified, Josh. vi. 26, with 1 Kings xvi. 34; the great promise of Christ in paradise, accomplished four thousands of years afterwards. The people of the Jews were ever warned by prophecy of the good or bad that befell them; scripture was to them not only an authentic register, but an infallible prognostication. These two signal prophecies, of the rejection of the Jews, and the calling of the Gentiles, were they not abundantly foretold, and accordingly came to pass? Can there be any compact here? When the Jews were the keepers of the oracles of God, would they foist in prophecies against themselves? Well, then, venture upon the truth of the word more than you have done; God hath ever hitherto stood to his word rather than he would go back from it; he would not only cast off his ancient people, but sent his own Son to suffer a shameful and an accursed death. He that hath been faithful hitherto, is he like to fail at last?

Obs. 5. I go on in the text,--of the apostles of our Lord Jesus. That the words of the apostles are the rule of faith. These were legati a latere, sent from the side of Christ; they had an extraordinary mission and call immediately from Christ, as Christ from the Father, John xvii. 18, and xx. 21. They had extraordinary gifts, as infallibility, quoad hoc, as to the work of an apostle, the power of working miracles, &c., and ordinary gifts in an extraordinary manner, as tongues, &c. They were to write scripture, and to consign a rule for the use of the church in all ages: This word of the kingdom must be preached till the end come,' Mat. xxiv. 14; and Christ prayed for no more than do believe through their word,' John xvii. 20; and to them he said, Mat. xxviii.

20, I am with you to the end of the world.' No other doctrine can we expect till we come to study divinity in the Lamb's face.

Obs. 6. Once more, these apostles of the Lord were Paul and Peter, 2 Tim. iii. 1-4, 2 Peter iii. 2, 3; from whence Jude taketh many passages.

It is not unlawful to make use of the writings of other men. Compare the 15th and 16th chapters of Isaiah with the 48th of Jeremiah, especially Isa. xvi. 8-11 with Jer. xlviii. 32-36, and you shall see how they agree almost word for word. The gifts and labours of others are for our use, not to feed laziness, but to exercise industry. In some cases, if we speak, iisdem poene literis et syllabis, as Melancthon wished divines would--in the same words--it is not a fault in controversies and positive truths; better make use of old words than coin new matter. Many now scoff at common truths, as if preachers did but talk like clocks, one after another. Doctrine cannot be varied: A good scribe,' indeed, must bring forth out of his treasury things both new and old,'--represent things in a fresh, savoury way; yet it is not altogether unlawful to make use of the words of others, where they are poignant and emphatical, not lazily to go on in the track, but as improving their conceptions.

Obs. 7. Yet again, Jude, an apostle, quoteth apostles; Daniel, a prophet, read in the prophecies of Jeremiah, Dan. ix. 2; Peter was conversant in the epistles of Paul, 2 Peter iii. 16; Paul himself had a care of the parchments,' that is, as some suppose, the volumes and books of scripture, 2 Tim. iv. 13. Certainly the scripture is not only for novices and young beginners, but for the highest: a study becoming the most eminently gifted. There is a passage, Ps. cxix. 79, Let those that fear thy name turn unto me, and those that have known thy testimonies.' That turning to him, some understand of joining with him

in friendship and familiarity, as certainly godly men, by a secret inclination, are moved to join one with another; others make the end of turning to him to behold in him a pattern and example of the Lord's grace; but the Chaldee paraphrase thus: Turn to my doctrine; those that know, let them come to know more. Well, then, do not rest in the light you have, and think that you are above these helps; you may be further instructed and established; if you had all knowledge, there are affections to be wrought upon; you may be quickened if not learn. Ministers, and those that abound in knowledge, may be stirred up by the admonitions and exhortations of others.

Ver. 18. How that they told you that there should be mockers in the last time, walking after their own ungodly lusts.

How that they told you. He meaneth not in word, but in writings. They told the church in general, but the apostle applieth it to them. Places are everywhere, 1 Tim. iv. 1, 2 Tim. iii. 1, Acts xx. 29, 30. In the last time. The days when the gospel was first preached are so called in a double sense--(1.) Either with respect to the approaching judgments on the Jews: 1 John ii. 18, Little children, now it is the last time.' The lease of their mercies was running out apace; so James telleth the carnal Jews, James v. 3, Ye have heaped up treasure for the last days.' When God was pulling down and plucking up, they were scraping and hoarding up wealth, and so became a greater prey to the destroyer. Or (2.) Because then the last dispensation began, which God would continue without change unto the world's end: Heb. i. 2, He hath in these last days spoken to us by his Son.' The Lord hath now fully revealed his mind, and the doctrine of salvation is put into a settled course, never more to be altered.

But why do the scriptures speak so much of scoffers in the last time? I answer:--(1.) Either by way of aggravation, that there should be

scoffers then, when God had sealed doctrine by the coming of his Son, beyond which godly men did not desire a greater confirmation; (2.) Or diakritikos, by way of distinction, more mockers in the last time rather than another, partly because the world was still continued, notwithstanding the threatenings of its destruction, 2 Peter iii. 4; partly because the holy people were then divided, Jews and Christians, and times of division prove times of atheism and scoffing; partly because carnal hopes of a temporal Messiah were disappointed, and by that means their assent was much weakened as to principles of faith.

Mockers. Some think it implieth seducers, who, by deluding, do, as it were, make a mock of men. But I suppose it is rather taken properly for such as in the Old Testament are termed scorners,' Prov. ix., or scoffers.' When men slight that of which themselves or others have had a high esteem, they usually do it by scorning and scoffing, thereby the more to deface all feelings of conscience. If you inquire what they mocked at, I answer--In general, it seemeth to be the Lordship of Christ; in particular, the glorious exercise of it at the day of judgment: Where is the promise of his coming?' 2 Peter iii. 4. And therefore is Enoch's prophecy produced, which foretelleth the Lord's coming with ten thousands of his saints;' and Hieron. in Isa. lib. xiv. cap. 51, telleth us of a discourse between Peter and Simon Magus, against whose school and sect our apostle is supposed to write, concerning the destruction of the world. If God be good, saith Simon, why will he destroy that which is good? if the world be bad, how is God good that made it? &c.

These scorners are said to walk after their own ungodly lusts. Walking implieth their settled course and daily custom of life; and their lusts are called ungodly lusts, partly to note the profane temper of their spirits, and partly to distinguish them from the motions and lustings

of the new nature.

The notes are these:--

Obs. 1. What is told to the church in general, we must apprehend it as told to us. Paul telleth Timothy, and Peter telleth the distressed strangers, and Jude saith they told you. So Heb. xii. 5, The exhortation speaketh to you,' &c.; as if the Hebrews were the persons to whom the Proverbs were directly written. The scriptures speak to every age, every church, every person, no less than to those to whom they were first directed. Well, then, it showeth us how we should be affected in reading the word; we should read it as a letter written by the hand of God from heaven to us by name. If an angel should bring us a letter from heaven, certainly we would regard it. The Bible is a message sent from heaven to acquaint us with the mind of God; if we own the divine authority of it, why do we regard it no more?

Obs. 2. We should not be troubled at what is foretold; monsters expected are not wondered at; expectation, as it deflowereth any good. thing that we expect, so it fore-armeth the mind against evil: John xvi. 4, These things I have told you, that when the time shall come ye may remember.' I have told you. Why? What good will that do? Ans. We are the better prepared to entertain evils when we expect them before they come, and the evil to which the mind is accustomed seemeth the less. Again, we have an experience of God's truth in the prediction, which will help us to believe and depend upon other promises. Finally, it assureth us that the Lord hath a hand and a counsel in all our troubles, for he told us of them before.

Obs. 3. That the scriptures speak much of the evil of the latter times; there is more knowledge, and yet more sin and error. Knowledge, where it is not sanctified, puffeth up and maketh men curious, and so they have an itch after novelties; or else it maketh men wicked,

exasperating our evil affections, and so, none so bad as they that sin against light; hence much of the error and profaneness in the latter clays. Again, the latter days are as the bottom and sink that receive the dregs of foregoing ages, and as the world groweth old it is much given to dreams and dotage. [163] Once more, much division there will be, and beating their fellow-servants,' Mat. xxiv. 49. Much libertinism; instead of casting off ceremonies, they will cast off ordinances, and desire to be freed not only from the Pope's laws, but the very law of Christ.

Obs. 4. Among other sins that are found in the latter times, there will be many scoffers, partly because in times of controversy men will lose all awe--when truths are made questionable assent is weakened; partly because in times of liberty men will give vent to their thoughts; partly because the scandals of professing Christians will make many turn atheists; partly because fabulous conceits concerning the coming and temporal kingdom of Christ will make men question the whole doctrine of his coming. Well, then, wonder not if you find many scoffing at the authority of the scriptures, Godhead of Christ, day of judgment, the ordinances, fasting and prayer. The latter age will yield such kind of men; and it is one of the arts of Satan, by his instruments, to make things of the saddest and most serious concernment to seem ridiculous, that when once the awe of these blessed truths is weakened, men may be more easily induced to cast off both the concernment and profession of them.

Obs. 5. Mockers and scoffers are usually the worst of sinners. In, the first psalm there are three degrees of sinners mentioned, and the highest rank are those that sit in, the seat of scorners,' Ps. i. 1. The Septuagint render there loimon, the chair of pestilences.' These are the pests of mankind. Scorning cometh from custom in sinning, and

maketh way for freedom in sinning. When conscience is seared, and men have lost not only restraints of grace, but natural modesty, then they fall a-scoffing; and when once they are turned scoffers, nothing will reclaim them. Reproofs enrage them. Rebuke a scorner, and he will hate thee,' Prov. ix. 8; yea, none do the devil so much service in preventing others as they. If your feet have been taken in this snare of death, extricate yourselves betimes. Beg earnestly for the more grace; there is some hope; God inviteth scorners, Prov. i. 22.

Obs. 6. Again observe, those that cast off the awe of the Lord's coming will certainly give up themselves to brutish lusts. Those mockers that said, Where is the promise of his coming?' are said here to walk after their own lusts.' Negantes enim poenam, negant et disciplinam, saith Tertullian (De Resurrect., cap. 11)--denying the resurrection of the flesh, they must needs be fleshly; for therefore they denied the day of his coming, to avoid the fear of his judgment.

Obs. 7. It argueth a state of wickedness to walk after our own lusts; that is, when sin and lust is our constant practice. A godly person may too often do according to his lusts, but he does not walk therein, it is not his constant road and path: Ps. lxviii. 21, He will wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy scalp of such a one as goeth on still in his trespasses.' Such as go on still are there accounted enemies to God. But what is to walk in sin? Ans. To make lust our principle, our course, our end. Our principle: Whatever a wicked man goeth about, he doth it out of some carnal impulse. His good duties are either to hide a lust or feed a lust. If he abstain from one sin, it is to feed another. Again, when it is our way and course: carnal men follow earthly things with greater earnestness and delight, but heavenly things in a slight and overly manner. The world and the flesh is their e'rgon, their business, all their care and comfort is it; and

this is their end, to please themselves and to satisfy their lusts.

Well, then, walk in the Spirit, that you may not fulfil the lusts of

the flesh.' See ver. 16.

[163] Mundus senescens patitur phantasias.'--Gerson.

Ver. 19. Those be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the

Spirit.

Here the apostle cometh to inform them who these mockers were of whom the apostles of the Lord spake. He describeth them by three notes:--

1. They separate themselves; (2.) Sensual; (3.) Not having the Spirit.

1. These be they who separate themselves, hoi apodiorizontes eautou`s. The old English translation had it thus: These are the makers of sects.' The word signifieth those which determinate and pluck up the bounds which God hath set. The apostle meaneth those that, without any necessity and warrant from God, cut off themselves from the communion of the church.

2. Sensual, psu'chikoi, animal or soul-men that have nothing but a reasonable soul, which, being corrupted, mindeth only the things of the flesh, and so noteth fleshly corrupt men. Tertullian, when leavened with Montanism, called the orthodox psychicoi, because they did not, with Montanus, condemn second marriages. The word is notable. It will be some advantage to us to consider it a little more fully. It is three times used in scripture, as in 1 Cor. ii. 14, the natural man,' psu'chikos, who is opposed to pneuma'tikos, the spiritual man.' So in James iii. 15, The wisdom that is from above is earthly, sensual, psu'chike`, devilish;' and then in this place, the word, as I said before, properly signifieth those that have a soul, and psu'che is elsewhere used for the sensitive soul; as where the apostle distinguished of body, soul, and spirit,' 1 Thes. v. 23, soma, psuche`, pneuma, where, by pneuma, spirit, he understandeth the intellectual or rational part; by psuche, soul, the mere animal or sensitive part, or

that sensual appetite which we have in common with the beasts; by soma, body, that which is commonly understood by it, the body, as it is the organ and instrument of the soul; and this is one reason why psu'chikoi cometh to signify sensual; the other is because man, being left to himself, to mere soul-light or soul-inclinations, can bring forth no other fruits than such as are carnal; for whilst men are destitute of sanctifying grace, sense and the flesh do reign in their full liberty and power. Well, then, these seducers were sensual, given up to brutish lusts and practices. They taxed others as carnal, and now none so libidinous, impure, and carnal as they.

3. Not having the Spirit. This is added not only to show that they were destitute of true grace and regeneration, but partly to rebuke their vain pretences. The Gnostics and other filthy seducers of that time did arrogate to themselves a singularity and peculiarity of the Spirit, as if all others were carnal, and they only had the Spirit; whereas indeed the contrary was true, they, giving up themselves to such filthy practices, showed that they had nothing of the Spirit in them; see Irenaeus, lib. i. cap. 9, sect. 6, 7; partly to show the incompatibleness of the Spirit with a fleshly and carnal life.

Notes from hence are these:--

Obs. 1. That separation or dividing ourselves from the fellowship of God's church is sinful, or a work of the flesh. The apostle describeth carnal persons, and of them he saith, They separate themselves;' and accordingly the apostle reckoneth di'chostasi'as, ai'reseis seditions, heresies,' or sect-makings in the church, among the works of the flesh, Gal. v. 20. And with good reason; to leave the church is to leave God. Cain was the first separatist we read of, Gen. iv. 19, He went out from the presence of the Lord.' God is everywhere; how from his presence? The meaning is, from the church, where is the presence of his grace.

Why should we run from the shepherds' tents where Christ feedeth at noon? Cant. i. 9, 10. And as it is contrary to our love to God, so to our love to the saints, to which we are so solemnly engaged. The question of separation lieth much in the dark, but obligations to love are clear and open; see Eph. iv. 4-6. It is sad that many that pretend much to religion make no conscience of schism, and offending the brethren by withdrawing from them, as if Christ's precepts of love were not to be stood upon, as certainly they are not by them who draw their liberty to the highest, and in indifferent matters take that course which will offend.

Obs. 2. Once more, it is little for the honour of Christ that his body is crumbled into small bits and portions. He prayed, Let them be one, that the world may know that thou hast sent me,' implying that our divisions and breaking into sects would breed suspicion of the gospel in the hearts of men, as if that great mystery of redemption by him were but a well-devised fable. Yet again, this running into parties and sects is our great hindrance and disadvantage; partly in spiritual things, for all duties of spiritual commerce and communion are forborn. It is said here, These separate themselves,' but, beloved, do ye edify one another in your holy faith;' implying that though others withdraw and omit all duty in this kind, those that continue in the body will contribute their mutual help and care to confirm and build up one another. A draft of wine is best preserved in the hogshead, and Christians in their societies; coals lying together keep in the heat; apostasy began in forsaking the assemblies, Heb. x. 23-25, and 1 John ii. 19. Partly as to our outward peace and welfare: separation sets others against us, and us against them; it exulcerateth men's minds against you when you give out as if you were more pure and holy than others: Isa. lxv. 5, Stand by thyself; come not near me, for I am

holier than thou.' Gracious singularity is many times envied and hated, but certainly peevish singularity draweth a just scorn upon itself. And it setteth you against others; men seldom separate but their hearts are much estranged from those from whom they separate; for religious ties, being once broken, are hardly made up again. Civil ruptures are not carried on with such vehemency, and are sooner closed again; but religion, being the highest bond and ligament, when it is once violated, the breach is the more irreconcileable.

Thus you see the evils of schism or separation; but because this is many times perversely charged, we must look a little more into the nature of it: the spouse had her veil rent, and God's own people have been burdened with the imputation of schism and faction. It will concern us to state what separation is sinful. In general, such as dissolveth that union and love which should be among Christians, or an unnecessary, unjust, or rash departure from fellowship and communion with one another in the ordinances of Christ. This separation--

1. Supposeth that there was once a union. We cannot be said to separate from the world of infidels, as Pagans, Turks, Jews, with whom we were never united; as water, when the ice is dissolved, cannot be said to be separated, in the sense we now take it, from bodies heterogeneal, as straws, wood, &c., because never united with them but by accident; aggregation there is, but not properly a separation. Separation is a dissolution of union, as when one church separateth from another who are united in the same body as parts of the church universal, or one or more persons from the same particular congregations of which they are members. I only add to this proposition, that this union is to be understood not only of what it is, de facto, but what ought to be, de jure. Thus persons that ought to join themselves, but out of schismatical principles do not, nor never did, join themselves to the

churches of Christ, may be guilty of this sinful separation, because there is a union required.

2. The fault and crime of the schism is not always in those that do actually separate and withdraw, but in those that cause it. A man threateneth death to his wife, hereupon she separateth; not she. but he maketh the separation. Borne obstinately continuing her corruptions, and threatening death to those that warn her, the cause of separation is in Rome, not in us. Strings in tune must not be brought down to strings out of tune, but the other set up to them: Go not thou to them (saith God to the prophet), but let them return to thee.'

3. Though those that separate be the fewer, yet that nothing varieth the case. Noah and eight persons went into the ark, and left the world in infidelity; Lot got out of Sodom with one family; Elijah was left alone to contest with Baal's priests. Not the greater, but the better part is to be regarded. Jacob's family was fewer than the Canaanites, and Israel less than the rest of the world. God's witnesses at the first may be but a very handful.

4. A separation from corruptions, and a separation from those that are corrupt, are two distinct things. A separation from corruptions is always enjoined, but not always from those that are corrupted. Those scriptures, Isa. liii. 11, and 2 Cor. vi. 17, speak of a fellowship with men in evil works; but now a separation from men that are corrupt is sometimes lawful: Rev. xviii. 4, Come out of her, my people,' &c.; and Jer. li. 9, She would not be healed,' &c. We may separate from such as separate from Christ, and continue obstinate in their corruptions. And sometimes it is not lawful, as when a church is reforming and purging out these corruptions, or they are not of such moment as that such a desperate remedy should be used. A limb is not to be cut off as soon as it acheth, but when it is rotten and likely to endanger the

whole body; when evils are incurable, deadly, and contagious, and we can no longer maintain communion without sin. At first it is good to try all things.

5. There are several sorts of separation, as these distinctions will manifest. Separation is either partial or total, negative or positive, universal or particular.

For the first distinction, there is a partial separation, when we with draw from the communion of the church in some ordinances and not in others, as in the supper, but not in praying and hearing of the word.

The second distinction beareth thus:--There is a negative separation, as when men do not hold communion with some church, but yet do not join elsewhere, but continue waiting for the amendment of that church.

Positive separation is when they embody in another church way, setting up altar against altar, and threshold against threshold.

The third distinction is to be understood thus:--There is a particular separation, whereby men renounce communion with the churches of such a kind and constitution, catholic or universal separation, by which men disclaim all churches extant in the world, as Seekers, and many loose and vagrant persons that are as yet to choose religion, or look for new messengers from heaven to resolve the questions that are now on foot.

Now the more unjust the ground is, the more aggravated is the sin by the degrees of it. If our separation be total and positive, and to deny all churches, of what constitution soever, argueth a high degree of pride and schism.

6. Faulty separation is that which is rash, sinful, and unjust; rash, without any real cause, merely for our better accommodation, or when we require that of the church which the scripture doth not require; unjust, without any sufficient cause, occasioning so many scandals and contentions for a trifle, and aggravating every discontent and

dissatisfaction to the highest; sinful I call it, when the grounds are as carnal as the practice, as revenge, personal discontent--as many in the primitive times went over to the sects in stomach and discontent: so Tertullian is reported by some to do to the Montanists--or else corrupt aims to be in the head of a train or troop, Acts xx. 28. It is easy to abuse the innocent credulity of the people, and therefore some wicked spirits make it their work to draw disciples after them;' or it may be carnal fear of the severity of discipline or the censures of the church, or out of love of gain, 2 Tim. iv. 10, or affectation of novelty, or a higher way than ordinary Christians, or out of faction; in Corinth, some of Paul, some of Apollos, some of Cephas,' 1 Cor. iii. 22.

7. The only lawful grounds of separation are three:--(1.) Intolerable persecution; (2.) Damnable heresy; (3.) Gross idolatry.

(1.) Intolerable persecution. [164] When we are thrust out, Christ biddeth us to flee into another city. (2.) Damnable heresy. We cannot bid them God-speed, lest we be partakers of their evil deeds, 2 John 11. (3.) Gross idolatry, when we cannot communicate in their worship without sin.

8. The scandals of professors are ground of mourning, but not ground of separation, 1 Cor. v. 2. Church guides must do their office, discern between the precious and the vile, that the hearts of the righteous be not made sad; yet if not, you have no ground to separate, be cause God may own them for a church though they have many scandals among them; as in Corinth there was incest, heresy, profaneness, many that never had repented,' 2 Cor. xii. 21; yet to the saints at Corinth.' We may communicate with a church without sin when we have done our duty, that is, informed, warned, mourned. If the word and ordinances be kept pure for substance, though the persons be corrupt, you may communicate

without sin. The Pharisees held the degree of doctors and expositors of the law, and so far were to be owned, though guilty of much personal wickedness, Mat. xxiii. 2, 3. The prophets lived in corrupt times, yet did they not separate from the assemblies of the church. Usually laziness is the ground of separation; they are loath to discharge their duty, to take pains, to convince, exhort, and warn their fellow members, or to call upon their pastors to take heed to their ministry;' and some pastors are loath to be at the labour to gain a rugged people to the obedience of the gospel, to use that frequent admonition and those serious ad dresses which are necessary for such a purpose, and to expose themselves to encounter those exasperations which the discharge of their duty will necessarily draw upon them, and therefore run into separate assemblies, where all things may be carried on more easily.

9. Lawful separation must not be sudden, till all due courses be tried: 1 Cor. xiii. 7, Love beareth all things, endureth all things, hopeth all things.' Certainly we should do much, endure much, ere we go off from the communion of any church. It must be with grief. When physicians cut off an arm or leg, they do not delight in it, but are driven to it of necessity. So when a judge condemneth a malefactor, he delighteth not in the punishment; in a civil war, though the cause be just, yet to delight in the executions that are done upon the enemy is not without sin: 1 Cor. xiii. 5, Charity rejoiceth not in evil, but rejoiceth in the truth.' Again, it must be with a mind to return when the evil is taken away. [165]

10. For the degrees of separation take these rules:--If a few separated for a weighty cause, they should only withdraw, tarrying for the reformation of the church; but numerous bodies may go on to positive separation, for they ought not to be without ordinances, but boldly to profess the right way. Again, as long as a lower degree of separation

will serve the turn, we should not go to a higher; it is a great weakening to the interest of Christ when we presently draw things to an extremity. In smaller differences we must observe the apostle's rule, Phil. iii. 16. But enough of this matter.

Obs. 2. The next point is taken from the second sin mentioned in this verse, sensual. He chargeth it upon those that separate themselves. Those that separate from the assemblies of the faithful are usually sensual. Discipline is too strait for them that would live according to their own lusts. The raven that was sent out of the ark, finding carrion floating abroad, had no mind to be cooped up there, and therefore returned not; so these, finding more liberty abroad than in the congregations of the faithful, separate and inhaunt with such among whom they may have room for their lusts. Moreover, they lose the benefit of those that should watch over them; church communion is a good preservative against lusts: Woe to him that is alone,' Eccles. iv. 10. Stragglers are more easily surprised; they were scattered and became meat to the beasts of the field, Ezek. xxxiv. 5, 6. They that separate are the more easily perverted both in judgment and practice; they turn familists; now familism is but painted atheism; or antinomists, and antinomism is but sin licensed and privileged. Again, it is just with God to punish that pride wherewith separation is accompanied with brutish lusts. Usually unsanctified knowledge runneth into pride, and then the affections are not governed. Well, then, ob serve the providence of God in setting a mark upon those that separate; they are men of unbridled affections, and without yoke, and are usually given up to carnal pleasures; and wonder not if sensual persons cast off communion with the church, when they cast off communion with God himself; those that spent their days in mirth said unto God depart from us,' Job xxi. 14. Many now that are come to the height of pride and sin

pretend to live to the height of the creature.

Obs. 3. The next note is, that sensual persons are evil persons. There are three ranks of sinners--those that are given to fleshly lusts, and they are the sensual; those that are given to the lusts of the eyes, and they are the worldly; those that are given to pride of life, and those are the proud, the great spirits of the world.' See 1 John ii. 16, and James iii. 15, with my comment there. Our work now lieth with the sensual, who seem to be the worst sort of sinners, and altogether unfit for any worthy action and exploit. To find them out, let us consider what sensuality is. It is an inordinate desire and delight in soft and delicate living; there is a due care of the body to keep it serviceable, and an allowed delight in the creature. He that created water created wine, creatures for our delight as well as our necessity, and false teachers have often set off themselves with the show of a severer abstinence: Col. ii. 21. It is possible that, by an undue rigour, the body may be used a little too hardly and disabled for better services, but yet we are more usually guilty of the excess than of the defect; pleasure is born and bred with us, and therefore hath a mighty force and enchantment upon the soul. The first years of human life are merely governed by sense, and for a great while all our business is to live and grow, and therefore most men miscarry by appetite and an undue liberty in meats, drinks, and sports. Now, to state the due bounds and limits which reason and religion hath set is very hard; different tempers and constitutions of body make rules uncertain. In the general, it is good to watch, lest pleasure become a master, and reason a slave. The two general limits are:--(1.) The health of the body; (2.) The welfare of the soul.

1. The health of the body must be regarded. Too much care for the body destroyeth it, as too much oil puts out the lamp: Wine and women take

away the heart,' Hosea iv. 11; that is, the generousness and sprightliness of a man. The vigour of nature is abated, gallant and active spirits effeminated, and brave hopes drowned and quenched in the puddle of excess, and masculine agility and vivacity melted away in ease and pleasure. The Romans were wont to have their funerals at the gates of Venus' temple.

2. The soul's welfare is of chief consideration. We must take heed that the soul be not either disfitted for duty or disposed for sin.

[1.] Disfitted for duty; when the soul cannot lift up itself to God and divine things, and findeth less aptitude for his service, you are inordinate: Luke xxi. 34, Let not your hearts be over-charged with surfeiting and drunkenness,' fec. The heart may be overcharged when the stomach is not. When we are warned of surfeiting and drunkenness, we think of vomiting, staggering, reeling, faltering in speech or gait. O Christians! you are guilty of it when the heart is over charged, and driveth on heavily in holy things. When we are warned of adultery, we think only of defiling other men's wives, or scattering our lusts promiscuously, as the beasts do; but alas! we are guilty of it when the inordinate use of a lawful wife doth quench our vigour and alacrity in our heavenly calling; si vinum ex apotheca tua, &c.--a man may drink too freely of his hogshead.

[2.] We must take care that the soul be not more disposed to sin. Divers lusts and pleasures' are fitly joined by the apostle, Titus iii.

3. If we do not watch over pleasures, the heart groweth more wanton and libidinous, the restraints of grace are weaker, and carnal motions more urgent and violent; the heart is nourished,' &c., James v. 5, the enemy put in strength and heart, 1 Peter ii. 11.

Well, then, let us beware of sensuality; other things defile a part, as covetousness the soul, but sensual lusts defile the soul and body too;

they leave guilt upon the soul and dishonour upon the body, while it is made a strainer for meats and drink, and a channel for lusts to run in. Other lusts seem to gratify the ambition of man and to exalt him, but these debase him, and turn him out among the beasts. To renounce pleasures is the first thing you must do if you mean to do anything in religion, otherwise you lie open to every temptation. The water of the sanctuary could not heal the miry places, Ezek. xlvii. 11; which is usually applied to sensual hearts. Pleasures bring a brawn and a deadness upon the conscience, and a cloud upon the understanding. Daniel, that had the high visions of God, lived by pulse. John the Baptist, that had the most eminent gospel dispensation, Mat. xi., fed upon locusts and wild honey. Among the heathens he was counted the most accomplished man that spent more oil in the lamp than wine in the bottle. [166] Certainly the baser a man is the more he affects carnal delights: Eccles. vii. 4, The heart of a fool is in the house of mirth.' That which wise men prefer is better than that which fools make choice of. Pleasures are the choice of fools; wise men know them to be baits and snares, that, if they be not watched, they soon put us out of frame, and unfit us for communion with God, Eccles. ii. 2. Once more, this sort of sins enslaveth, and by custom gaineth upon the heart more than others do, and bringeth us under a power which we cannot easily break, 1 Cor. vi. 12. Therefore use pleasures with care and caution, that when we take them they may not take us. God's people, I suppose, are not so easily tempted to adultery and drunkenness, but beware of gluttony; [167] the throat is a slippery place, and instead of supplying nature we feed lust. Be not too much in the use of carnal delights, lest you suffer this distemper of spirit to take root. Dives fared deliciously every day. There are times of abstinence, as well as liberal enjoyment in the creature. When our lives are but a diversion

from one pleasure to another, nature groweth wanton and unsatisfied, and men live as if they were born to eat, drink, play, sport, and sleep, Luke xvii. 27. Lastly, take heed of soliciting lusts when you should quench them, Rom. xiii. 14.

Obs. 4. The next thing that we may observe is, that sensual persons have not the Spirit. These two are contrary, flesh and spirit,' Gal. v. 17; and they that cherish the one do necessarily banish the other, and as they enlarge the one they straiten the other. The Spirit is a free spirit, and sensual persons are very slaves; the Spirit is a pure spirit, and they are unclean; the Spirit is active, and they are gross and muddy, of a dull and and stupid nature; the Spirit worketh intellectual and chaste delights, and they are altogether for base and dreggy pleasures: such a perfect contrariety is there between them. More distinctly take it thus:--

1. Sensual men have little of the enlightening of the Spirit; their palate is better than their understanding: Eph. v. 18, Be not drunken with wine, wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit;' where the fumes of wine and the motions of the Spirit are compared as things incompatible. In marshy countries we do not expect a clear air; so sensual persons have seldom any clear and raised thoughts of God: men given to pleasures can taste meats and drinks, but not doctrines.

2. Sensual men have little of the quickenings and efficacy of the Spirit; the more they dissolve and melt away their precious hours and spirits in pleasures, the more do they grow sapless, dead, and careless, and lose all tenderness of conscience and liveliness of affection: they quench the vigour of nature, much more do they quench the Spirit; voluptuaries are said to be past feeling,' Eph. iv. 19.

3. They have little of the comforts of the Spirit. The comforts of the Spirit arise from meditating on the works of God, Ps. civ. 34; or

tasting his love, 1 Peter ii. 3; or contemplating our great hopes, 2 Cor. iv. 18. Now carnal men can relish none of this; they cannot exercise love, or faith, or hope, that they may delight themselves in God, and have some lively tastes of eternal life. When the soul lieth under the dominion of carnal and dreggy pleasures, it is incapable of thinking upon God and his works, or relishing inward consolation; love is preoccupied.

Well, then, we should the more take heed that we be not sensual. Never had any sensual person any great measure and portion of the Holy Ghost in gifts or graces. The devil easily entereth into swine, but the Holy Spirit of God will not dwell there. A man is put to his choice which he will have--pleasures or the Spirit. It will be sad for you, if you love pleasures more than God,' 2 Tim. iii. 4, and prefer these dreggy delights before those masculine joys which will accrue to you by communion with God. If we were altogether to renounce delight, it would be more irksome. No; you are only called to exchange it. Which will you choose, then? to live at large and wallow in carnal contentments, or be employed in the serious and grave exercises of religion? Surely, one moment's communion with God is better than all the mirth we can get by the pastime of an age.

[164] Under this head is comprised sinful excommunication. See John ix. 34, and xvi. 2.

[165] Ab ecclesia Romanâ non alio discessimus animo quam ut si correcta ad priorem ecclesiae formam redeat, nos quoque ad illam revertamur, &c.'--Zuinglius. See my Comment on James iii. 17.

[166] Pleion elaion oi'nou dapa'nesas.'

[167] Ebrietas longe est a me, domine; crapula autem nonuunquam surrepit servo tuo.'--Aug. Confes.

Ver. 20. But ye, beloved, build up yourselves in your most holy faith,

praying in the Holy Ghost.

Here the apostle cometh to exhort; as all along, with the description of seducers, he intermingleth exhortation. The sum of the exhortation is to quicken them to the use of the means of perseverance and constancy. Build up yourselves, epoikodomountes; the word signifieth the going on with a building already begun, and fitly noteth that care they should take for the growth of their spiritual estate. Yourselves, heautous; some translate invicem, build up one another; that I confess is the apostle's intent, but first to press them to a care of their own salvation, and then mutually to care for one another: see 1 Thes. v. 11, Comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, as ye also do;' and possibly this is spoken here by way of opposition to those that separate themselves. In your most holy faith. By faith may be meant either the grace of faith or the doctrine of faith. I rather suppose the latter, that true and pure religion which they had learned from the apostles, which was the foundation already laid, unto which they should keep close. If it be meant of faith, the grace, then he persuadeth them to progress, and to lay hold on the superstructure of good works and final perseverance, Mat. vii. 24. This faith is called most holy, in opposition to the profane mysteries of the Gnostics and Valentinians. It is a holy rule, and maketh us holy: John xvii. 17, Sanctify them by thy truth, thy word is truth.' Praying in the Holy Ghost, en pneu'mati agi'o, may be rendered, in, with, or by the Holy Ghost; that is, by his motion and inspiration, and gifts and graces received from him. Elsewhere the Holy Ghost is said to pray in us, Rom. viii. 26; and here we pray in the Holy Ghost. He prayeth in us so as we pray in him; he

prayeth in us, to note the excitations of his grace; we pray in him, to imply the concurrence of our faculties; which is to be noted against the familists, who make the Spirit to be the immediate formal cause of all our actions, as if in the productions of grace the Spirit did only make use of us as Bilhah did of Rachel, to bring forth upon her knees,' Gen. xxx. 3, and the action were wholly his own.

The notes are these:--

Obs. 1. It is not sufficient to be established or grounded in the faith, but we must daily increase and grow more and more therein. When the foundation is laid, the building must go on piece by piece; they that are contented with a little faith have no faith; graces though imperfect are always growing, Luke xvii. 5. It is the holy ambition of Christians to be more like God every day; certainly their temper is contrary to the temper of God's people, that think they have learned enough, know enough, are holy enough; none are so knowing but they may know more, so established but they may be more. Here we are in a state of progress, not of rest and perfection; the corn in the field groweth, though in the barn it doth not, Eph. iv. 12, 13, Phil, iii. 13. A Christian is always reaching forth and pressing onward, and the nearer he cometh to heaven his motions and tendencies are the more earnest, as a stone moveth faster the nearer it cometh to the centre; the more he enjoyeth, still he hath new motives to seek more: Prov. i. 5, A wise man will hear and will increase learning;' a good man would go to heaven as fast as he can, not make a hard shift, but enter abundantly,' 2 Peter i. 11.

Obs. 2. To grow in faith is a means to persevere in faith. Man is of an active nature; either he groweth better or worse. We shall not keep what we have received if we do not labour to increase in it, as a house begun to be built goeth to decay, and droppeth down more and more, if

we do not go on to finish it. Do we grow, then, or decline? Did we observe our first coolings, the mischief would not be so great; but we, like the hen, as long as there is one egg in the nest, observe not how many are taken away; as long as we have any tolerable affections to the things of God, or somewhat to keep us alive, we do not consider how many degrees of grace we have lost.

Obs. 3. Faith--take it for the grace--is the proper foundation of holiness and good works. Works without faith are but a roof without a foundation, and faith without works is a foundation without a building; good fruit supposeth a good tree, Mat. vii.

Obs. 4. The faith of Christians is a most holy' faith; no doctrine hath such pure precepts, such high examples, such raised motives, such mysterious enforcements, such blessed rewards, and all to encourage holiness. If ever anything were exactly fitted to its purpose, surely the word is fitted to promote holiness. The precepts of the law require it; the doctrine of the gospel showeth where virtue and power is to be had to perform it; the promises encourage it; the examples of God and Christ show the height and exactness of it; the examples of the saints show it is possible; the word and ordinances work it, as being instituted by God for such a purpose, and accompanied with the power of his grace, Eph. v. 26. God hath reserved this honour of sanctifying the heart to the doctrine of the scriptures, to evidence their divine original: James i. 18, He hath begotten us to himself by the word of truth.' This great change which is wrought in the heart of man is by the word. A moral lecture may a little fashion the outward man, and reduce him to a civil course, as Xenocrates' moral lecture made Polemo leave his vicious and sensual course of life; but regeneration is only found in the school of Christ. Well, then, if you will know the best religion, observe where there is most holiness discovered and wrought,

Ps. xix. 7-9, John xvii. 17. In the word of God you have the copy of his holiness; there is somewhat of good life and moral behaviour among heathens, but nothing of regeneration and genuine holiness. Once more, an impure life will not suit with a holy faith; you dishonour God and disparage your religion when you walk as heathens. This holy faith is best kept in a pure conscience,' 1 Tim. iii. 9.

Obs. 5. From that building up yourselves. In building up, that is, in growth and perseverance, there is a. concurrence of our own endeavours; we are living stones,' 1 Peter ii. 4, after we are converted, and are not altogether dead and passive, as in conversion. After we have received Christ' we may walk with him,' Col. ii. 6. Motion and operation followeth life: he that made thee without thee will not save thee without thee.

Obs. 6. From the other interpretation of the word yourselves--that is, one another--observe, that mutual conference is a means of perseverance. Solomon saith, Eccles. iv. 10, When two lie together they have heat.' Surely good company preserveth and keepeth up our warmth and vigour, as a remedy against apostasy. Spiritual communion and conference is often pressed; see Heb. iii. 13, and x. 24, 25. When God's people did oftener meet and confer together, there was more life in them.

Obs. 7. Next to conference, prayer is required. Note thence, that prayer is a means of establishment. We are kept by God's power, and God's power is set a-work by prayer; this is the breath that keepeth in the fire. Men that neglect prayer find sensible decays. When they suspected some distemper upon Job's spirit, they charge him with the neglect of prayer: Job xv. 4, Surely thou restrainest prayer.' No wonder if men grow unsavoury, worldly, voluptuous, when they let days go, and weeks go, and God never heareth from them.

Obs. 8. Then we pray aright when we pray in the Holy Ghost;' this concurrence is necessary, both with respect to acceptance and assistance.

1. With respect to acceptance. God will own nothing in prayer but what cometh from his Spirit; any other voice is strange and barbarous to him: Rom. viii. 27, He knoweth the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.' The Lord delighteth not in the flaunting of pates and the unsavoury belches and eructations of a human spirit; the tuneable cadency of words is but an empty ring in God's ears. The psalmist saith, Ps. cxli. 2, Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense.' Now the censers were to be kindled with holy fire before the smoke went up; the coal wherewith we are kindled must be taken from the altar, not from a common hearth, and then our prayer goeth up as incense: God's course is to prepare the heart,' and then to grant the request: Ps. x. 17, Thou wilt prepare their hearts, and cause thine ear to hear.' Surely God's ear will be opened if our hearts be opened; when he himself sets us a-work we need not doubt of audience. Fire from heaven to consume the sacrifice was the solemn token of acceptance heretofore; fire from heaven is the token still, even a holy ardour wrought in us by the Spirit.

2. In point of assistance. Prayer is a work too hard for us; we can babble of ourselves, but we cannot pray without the Holy Ghost; we can put words into prayer, but it is the Spirit puts affections, without which it is but a little cold prattle and spiritless talk. Our necessities may sharpen our prayers, but they cannot enliven our prayers. A carnal man may feel the impulsions of a natural fervency, and so cry unto God as the young ravens cry unto him, and in all creatures there is a desire of relief: the rude mariners in the tempest were very earnest, Jonah i. 6. But now gracious affection is quite

another thing than this natural fervency. There may be cold and raw wishes after grace, but not serious volitions and spiritual desires; these we must have from the Holy Ghost. Surely if we did consider what prayer is we should see the need of this assistance. It is a work which will cost us travail of heart, Acts i, 14, proskarterountes en te proseu'che, and James v. 16, dee'sis energoume'ne. It is expressed by striving.' Rom. xv. 30, Strive with me in prayers,' and Col. iv. 12, Labouring for you fervently in prayers,' &c., agonizo'menos. It is a striving with God himself, and then there is no setting upon God but by his own strength. This was figured in Jacob's wrestling, Gen. xxxii. 25, to the end; which is explained Hosea xii. 4, Yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed; yea, he wept and made supplication.' The party that Jacob wrestled with is called a man, an angel, and God; a man, for the shape and form assumed; an angel, to note the second person, who is the messenger of the covenant; and God, Gen. xxxii. 30. It was such an angel as blessed him, which is proper to God. Now in the assumed body Jacob wrestled with him, which was symbolical; the prophet referreth it to his prayers. But how is it said he could not prevail against Jacob? With a blast of his mouth he might have confounded him, and it had been as easy for him to maim and destroy every joint as to make him halt and lame of one thigh. I answer--He could not because he would not; he gave out but such a measure of strength to the body assumed, and the Lord did wrestle both in and against Jacob, in Jacobo, Deus est seipso fortior--he wrestleth against us with his left hand, and strengtheneth us with his right, so that God's power prevaileth over himself. All this is spoken to show what need we have of a divine power when we strive with God.

But now what is it to pray in the Holy Ghost? I shall answer it in a word. The Spirit helpeth us in prayer in a way of gifts or graces. In a

way of gifts, that the heart may riot be bound up, and that we may have necessary words to give vent to affections. Adam maimed us both as to gifts as well as graces; and therefore, that our supplies in Christ may be answerable, the Spirit bestoweth upon us the gift of prayer, that we may enlarge ourselves to God on all occasions. This gift was either extraordinary and proper to the first times of the gospel, when they were able of a. sudden to dictate a prayer in a strange language which they had never learned; so it is said 1 Cor. xiv. 15, I will pray with the Spirit, and with understanding also.' Many did pray with the Spirit, that is, made use of this gift, but to the neglect of edifying; they did not pray so as they might be under stood by the hearers. Now saith the apostle, I would use the gift but to edification, so as the understanding of the auditory may go along with me.

[1.] The ordinary gift of the Spirit is that special dexterity whereby men are able to put their meaning into apt words. It is not of such a miraculous infusion, and so wonderful in itself, as the former, because it dependeth much upon the temper and suitable constitution of the body, and is much bettered by industry, hearing, reading, meditation, conference, &c., as all other ordinary habits are. But such a gift there is in the church, as we find by plain experience, many men's tongues being as the pen of a ready writer,' Ps. xlv. 1. All miraculous gifts are now turned into ordinary gifts somewhat like them, as discerning of spirits into a sagacity and cautelous prudence, gifts of tongues into a special dexterity that way, and gifts of healing into skill in physic; so praying with the Spirit into readiness of utterance and freedom of speech. Now, though we are to covet the best gifts and strive after them, yet we must be contented with our measure. Sometimes this gift is given to carnal men because of their service in the church. Gifts are for the body; they may have great abilities to pray

and preach, and may be carried on with full gales of outward assistance. Usually it is given unto men according to their constitution and natural receptivity; all cannot expect a like quickness and enlargement of speech. In the penmen of scripture you may observe a difference of character and style according to their temper and education, though their assistance as to words was also infallible. Isaiah writeth in a courtly style, and Jeremiah in a priestly, and Amos' manner of speech relisheth of his calling. In the New Testament, John is seraphical, Paul argumentative, and Peter writeth in a milky, sweet, middle way, &c.

[2.] There is the gracious assistance of the Holy Ghost. Now, this is either habitual or actual.

(1.) Habitual grace is necessary to prayer: Zech. xii. 10, I will pour upon them a spirit of grace and supplication.' Where there is grace there will be supplication. As soon as we are new born we fall a-crying; Behold, he prayeth,' Acts ix. 11, is the first news we hear of Paul after his conversion. Prayer is a kindly duty to the new creature. Things of an airy and fiery nature, a little thing will carry them upward, it is their natural motion and tendency; the regenerate are easily drawn into God's presence, it is the vent and utterance by which we discover the impression that is upon us. The priests were to wash in the great laver before they went to the altar; we are washed in the laver of regeneration, and renewed by the Holy Ghost,' Titus iii. 5, and so made fit to offer spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

(2.) There is actual help and assistance which we have from the Spirit. Though a man be regenerate, yet he cannot pray as he ought, unless he be still moved and assisted by the Holy Ghost. This is continual, for we soon work out the strength which we have received. Now, these actual

motions do either concern the time of prayer or the matter and the manner of it.

First, The time of prayer, the Spirit suggesteth the fittest seasons; he that searcheth out the deep things of God, knoweth the acceptable times, Ps. xxxii. 6, and accordingly giveth notice to the heart by set ting it a-work in serious addresses to God: Ps. xxvii. 8, Thou saidst, Seek ye my face, and my heart said, Thy face, Lord, will I seek.' God speaketh to us by holy motions and the impulsions of his grace, and we answer God by a ready obedience. It is the worst scorn we can put upon one whom we hate when we deny to speak with him when he sendeth for us. By these motions we are invited to come and confer with God; do not say, I am not at leisure. I would not have this interpreted as if every motion to prayer were from the Spirit. It is possible Satan may oppress an anxious soul with the tyranny of un reasonable impulsions to duty; I only understand such motions as are regular and according to the word. Neither would I again be so understood as if God were never to be called upon, or we were never to pray, but when the Spirit moveth us; that is one of the carnal fancies of many wretches now. No, no; God must have his daily acknowledgment, Give us this day our daily bread;' but my meaning is, that such a season, when we are so strongly moved by the Spirit of God, should not be neglected.

Secondly, The matter of prayer is suggested by the Holy Ghost. Let a man alone and he will soon run into a temptation, and cry for that which it were cruelty in God to give him; therefore the direction of the Holy Ghost is necessary, that we may not ask a scorpion instead of a fish, and a stone instead of bread: Rom. viii. 27, He maketh intercession for the saints, according to the will of God.' We take counsel of our lusts and interests when we are left to our own private spirit, and so would have God to be a minister of our carnal desires,

and would engage him in our quarrels and private revenges; or else ask meat for our lusts. Now, the Holy Ghost teacheth us to ask not only what is lawful, but what is expedient for us, that so the will of God may take place before our inclinations.

Thirdly, For the manner. In every moral action the manner of working is a chief circumstance. A man may sin in doing good, but not in doing well. Now, in prayer, where we have immediately to do with God, we should take great heed in what manner we come to him. The right manner is when we come with affection, with confidence, with reverence.

First, With affection. It is the Holy Ghost sets us a-groaning: Rom. viii. 26, He maketh intercession for the saints with such sighs and groans as cannot be uttered.' Words are but the outside of prayer; sighs and groans are the language which God will understand, and these are the prayers which the Holy Ghost maketh for us, and in us. We learn to mourn from the turtle, from him that descended in the form of a dove; he draweth sighs from the heart, and tears from the eyes. Parts may furnish us with eloquence, but the Spirit giveth affection, that earnest reaching forth of soul, that holy importunity, that spiritual violence. It is all of his working. Many a prayer is neatly ordered, and tunably delivered, but this artifice of words smelleth of the man; then it savoureth of the Holy Ghost when there is life and power in it, and the poor supplicant sets himself to wrestle with God, as if he would overcome him by his own strength.

Secondly, With confidence. When we come in a childlike manner, and call God Father, Rom. viii. 16, We have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.' Usually, we do not mind this part of the Spirit's help in prayer; we look to gifts and enlargements, but not to this childlike confidence, that we may be able to call God Father without blasphemy and reproach. It is an easy matter to language it

with our mouths, but to have the sense of our adoption in our hearts is a difficult thing. Sometimes the Spirit witnesseth it more explicitly by expressions; as if it were said when we go to prayer, Be of good cheer, thy sins are pardoned, God is thy God. At other times, by impressions or more secret instincts; if not by working child like confidence, yet childlike affection, optando, si non affirmando, that we may call God Father by option and choice, if not by direct affirmation, or a clear sense of our adoption.

Thirdly, With reverence. That we may be serious and awe-full, God is best seen in the light of his own Spirit. The heathens could say, Non loquendum de Deo sine lumine--we need light from God when we come to speak of or to God. That sense of the Lord's greatness, and those fresh and awful thoughts that we have of his majesty in prayer, they are stirred up in us by the Holy Ghost; he uniteth and gathereth our hearts together, that they may not be ravelled and flittered abroad by impertinent and vain thoughts, Ps. lxxxvi. 11. Leave men to themselves, and they will do as foolishly as a man that is to gather a posy for his friend, and filleth it fuller of stinking weeds than flowers. We shall mingle many unsavoury worldly thoughts, or deal as basely and affrontingly with God as if a man under the law should mingle sulphur and brimstone with the sweet perfumes that were in the censer. Lust will be interposing in prayer, and out-talking grace; therefore, that we may be reverent and heedful, we must use the help of the Spirit, praying in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance,' Eph. vi. 18.

1. Well, then, when thou goest to prayer, look upon the Holy Ghost as appointed by the Father and purchased by the Son to help thee in this sweet and comfortable service: Rom. viii. 26, The Spirit helpeth our infirmities,' sunantila'mbanetai, goeth to the other end of the staff

and beareth a part of the burden. We are tugging and wrestling at it, and can make no work of it, but the Spirit cometh, and puts under his shoulder, and then it cometh off kindly.

2. It informeth us how much they sin that are so far from praying with the Holy Ghost, that they do not pray with their own spirit. Alas! this is but babbling, when the heart doth not go along with the lips.

3. It informeth us of the privileges of the saints. God is their father, willing to hear prayers; Christ is their advocate, willing to present their requests in court; and the Spirit a notary to indite and draw up their requests for them. Oh! what encouragement have we to go to the throne of grace! Surely we do not improve our privileges, or else we might have more comfortable access to the Father through Christ by the Spirit, Eph. ii. 18.

Ver. 21. Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

The apostle goeth on directing to the means of perseverance. As before he mentioned two duties, conference and prayer, so here two graces, love and hope.

Keep yourselves; that is, use the means: We are kept by the power of God unto salvation;' but because of the concurrence of our endeavours, it is ascribed to us, yourselves. Some interpret it as before, alii alios, keep one another. In the love of God. It may be taken for that love which God beareth to us, or else for the love wherewith we love God, which is fitly called the love of God, partly because God is the object of it, partly because the author of it, he commandeth or begetteth it, increaseth it, perfecteth it in the soul. In this second sense I take the love of God here, namely, for that grace wrought in us; and the great work committed to our care is to keep it, increase it, and discover it in all the operations of it. Looking, the formal

act of hope; for the mercy. The cause is put for the effect. For all that good which we shall receive at Christ's coming, it is called mercy, because his proceeding with the elect at the last day will be upon terms of grace. Of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is so called because it is purchased by Christ, and dispensed by him: John xvii. 2, he hath power to give eternal life;' and at his coining he introduceth his people into their happy estate, John xiv. 3. Unto everlasting life. Our happiness in heaven is sometimes called everlasting life,' at other times everlasting glory.' Observe hence:--

Obs. I. In perseverance there is a concurrence of our care and diligence: Phil. ii. 12, 13, Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling,' &c. The main work is God's: He that hath begun a good work must perfect it,' Phil. i. 6; and the same Jesus that is 4 author is also finisher,' Heb. xii. 2. The deeper radication of the habit, the defence of it, the growth and perfection of it, the ability to act, is all from God: 1 Peter v. 10, The God of all grace make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, and settle you;' but yet a concurrence there is of our care and endeavours. A child in the womb is nourished by the mother, liveth by the life of the mother, feedeth by the food of the mother; but a child born liveth a more distinct and separate life of its own, though it still be under the mother's care and provision. So it is with us after grace received. We have a power to act and do what is necessary for the preservation of the spiritual life. Well, then, let us not neglect the means. You must not lie upon the bed of ease, and think that God must do all. He doth all indeed, but in us and by us. Idle wishes will do us no good as long as our hands refuse to labour.

Obs. 2. Again, men that have grace had need look to the keeping of it. Why?

1. We ourselves are prone to revolt: This people loveth to wander,' Jer. xiv. 10, and they err in their hearts,' though under the immediate conduct of God, Ps. xcv. 10. It is notable in scripture that we read of a decay both of faith, love, and obedience, which are the three main graces; some that left their first faith,' 1 Tim. v. 12; others that left their first love,' Rev. ii. 4; and as to obedience, we read of the first ways' of David, as distinguished from his latter: 2 Chron. xvii. 3, He walked in the first ways of his father David.' David, in his latter time, fell into scandalous crimes.

2. We are assaulted with continual temptations. An importunate suitor, by perseverance in his suit, may at length prevail. Satan will lose nothing for want of asking. Those that refused at first may yield afterward. Long conversing with the world may taint the spirit. A deformed object, when we are used to it, seemeth less deformed. In dwelling lust, though long restrained, breaketh out afterward with the more violence. Rose-trees nipped in June bear in the winter. Many that in youth have held a hard hand over sin, in their very old age have found their lusts more violent.

3. A man of long standing is apt to grow secure and negligent, as if he were now past danger; when his condition was doubtful, he seemed to be more diligent and serious, but when the labours and difficulties of our first entering into favour with God are well over, and a man hath gotten some freedom from the terrors of the law, and some peace and confidence, he is in danger of security, by which all runneth to waste in the soul. See Rev. iii. 17-19. Well, then, this life is never exempted from care; either to get grace or to keep it, w r e need to be watchful and diligent to the very last. Man is a changeable creature, and Satan is restless, either he continueth the old suit or altereth the course of temptations. It is his subtlety in that he doth not

always play the same game; a man may stand one brunt and fail in another: Joab turned after Adonijah, though not after Absalom,' 1 Kings ii. 28. Every new condition bringeth new snares: Ephraim is a cake not turned,' Hosea vii. 8. A man may be well baked of one side, and yet quite dough of another; the children of God prosperous differ from the children of God afflicted, Phil. iv. 12. We had need to learn how to walk up-hill and down-hill, that we may keep with God upon all grounds. Again, corruptions may be disguised; a man may withstand open enemies, and yet fail by the insinuations of those that have a show of goodness. The young prophet withstood the king stoutly, but yet was perverted by the insinuations of the old prophet, 1 Kings xiii. 4, with 19th verse. Meletius, a sufferer under pagans, but went over to the Arians.

Again, where there seemeth to be least danger there is most cause of fear. Lot, that was chaste in Sodom, miscarried in the mountains, where there were none but his own family. Conscience, that is now tender, may be strangely deadened and laid by for a time. Who would have thought that he whose heart smote him for cutting off the lap of Saul's garment, should afterwards fall into uncleanness and blood, and He asleep in it for a long time? Confidence is sure to be dismounted. Peter is a sad instance. He told his master, If all men deny thee, yet not I,' and he meant as he spoke. He ventureth on a band of men with a rusty blade, followeth Christ into the high priest's hall, who more secure than Peter? But all this confidence failed, though it met with but a weak trial, the soft words of a damsel's question; such feathers are we when the blast of a temptation is let loose upon us. Upon all these considerations now let us make it our care to keep what graces we have gotten, which will never be done without watchfulness and diligence to quicken us further to it.

1. Unless you keep it, all is in vain; if so be it be in vain, Gal.

iii. 4. It is in vain as to the final reward. It is not in vain as to the increase of punishment. You will lose all your cost you have been at for Christ, Ezek. xviii. 24, 2 John 8. Your watchings, strivings, prayings, sufferings, come to nothing. The Nazarite was to begin all anew if the days of his separation were defiled, Num. vi. 12. Nay, it is not in vain as to punishment, 2 Peter ii. 20-22.

2. To lose any degrees of grace is a great loss; it is the most precious gift, 2 Peter i. 1, conduceth to the highest ends--eternal happiness, fitteth us for communion with God; all the world cannot repair this loss, or purchase a supply for us. We are to be accountable for degrees, as well as for the grace itself. They that had five talents reckoned for five; a factor that giveth an account only for a part of the estate received is not accounted faithful. We may not be intrusted with so much again. A man that hath fallen may recover his peace and joy, but in a lower degree; a prodigal that hath once broken is not trusted with a like stock again, and a man after a great disease may never come to the same degree and pitch of health. So Christians may not recover that largeness of spirit after their foul falls and fulness of inward strength and comfort.

3. Those that have made profession of love to God, and yet afterwards break with him, bring an ill report upon the Lord, as if he were an ill master. I am persuaded that the devil in policy lets many men alone for a while to make a strict profession, and seem to be full of zeal and holiness, that they may afterwards do religion a mischief. Whilst they act for God, though they do some things excellently, Satan never troubleth them; he is at truce with them till they have gotten a name for the profession of godliness and strictness of conversation, and when once they have gotten a name, their fall will be more scandalous, more ignominious to themselves, and disgraceful to religion. Verily,

this is a common experience, we see many forward, hot, and carried out with great impulsions of zeal, and all this while Satan lets them alone, he knoweth how mutable men are, and how soon they begin to tire in the ways of God, therefore lets them alone till they have run themselves out of breath, that afterward, by a more notable defection, they may shame themselves and harden others. If Judas will be a disciple, he lets him alone; if Simon Magus will be baptized, and Nicolas [168] bear office in the church, he lets them alone; he knoweth the best are mutable; that many take up their religion out of interest, that men are soon weary of their own scrupulousness and rigid observances, that they first make conscience of all things, and then of nothing; and therefore he lets them go on without any notable defect or failing, to fly some youthful lusts, to renounce some interests, till they have gotten credit enough to discredit religion. See 2 Tim. ii. 18. O Christians! if you are not moved with respect to God, yet for your own cause; after a blaze will you go out in a stench? A house begun and not finished is a habitation for screech-owls; but, on the contrary, what an honour is it to hold out to the last, to be like Mnason, an old disciple!'

4. The worst is past, we have but a few years' service more, and we shall be happy for ever: Your salvation is nearer than it was when you first believed.' Rom. xiii. 11; a little more and you will land safe at the expected haven; if we have a rough passage, it is a short one. What! will you not watch with me one hour?' saith Christ to his apostles. The longest life is no more in comparison of eternity. Enoch lived longer than most men do, he lived three hundred and sixty-five years, Gen. v. 22, but all that while he walked with God;' and is it so tedious to us to tell over a few summers and winters before we come to heaven?

Obs. 3. The next point is more particular and express. That of all graces, love needeth keeping. Why? (1.) Because of all graces it is most decaying, Mat. xxiv. 12, Rev. ii. 4. Flame is soon spent, graces that act most strongly require most influence, as being most subject to abatement; we sooner lose our affections than anything else. (2.) Because love is a grace that we can ill spare; it is the spring and rise of all duties to God and man. (1st.) To God. Love is the first affection corrupted and renewed. The schoolmen dispute whether there be anything a man doth that hath not its first rise from love. It is love maketh us angry, and it is love maketh us hate, Ps. xcvii. 10, and love maketh us grieve, John xi. 35, 36, much more is it love that maketh us hope, and desire, and delight; so it is gracious love that sets us a-mourning for sin, Luke vii. 47, puts us upon hatred of evil, delighting in God and in his laws; see 2 Cor. v. 14, 1 John v. 3, Gal. v. 6: Faith worketh by love,' faith receiveth grace, and love exerciseth it. If we would do anything in the resistance of sin, in keeping the commandments, we cannot spare our love. (2d.) As to man. Love is a grace that will make us industrious for the good of others, and therefore we read of the labour of love,' 1 Thes. i. 3. It is gluten animarum, the glue of souls, the cement and solder of the church; the jointing that runneth throughout all the living and squared stones, Col. iii. 14; by this souls are mingled, and all mutual offices done cheerfully. Want of love to the saints is the cause of apostasy, for the less we love them the more we associate to the wicked, and then zeal is damnified and abated.

Well, then, watch the more earnestly against the decays and abatements of love;' leaving our first love is a disease not only incident to hypocrites, but sometimes to God's own children. Christians go back ward in the heat and light of their graces ten degrees, either through

the badness of the times, Mat. xxiv. 12, or through a cursed satiety that is apt to creep upon us. Affections are deadened to things to which we are accustomed. The Israelites cried out, Nothing but this manna!' Our desires are not so fresh and lively after long acquaintance. Some times it cometh from negligence, or a sluggish carelessness, we do not take pains to keep graces alive, nor anazopurein, stir up the gift that is in us,' 2 Tim. i. 6: as the priests in the temple were to keep in the holy fire, so are we, by prayers and meditation and constant work, to keep our love alive; but when these exercises are neglected, it decreaseth. Sometimes it falleth out through freeness in sinning. Neglect is like not blowing up the coals; sinning is like pouring on waters, a very quenching of the Spirit, 1 Thes. v. 19. Again, through secure dalliance with the pleasures of sin, or cumbering the soul with the cares of the world; when the heart runneth out too much upon the creature, God is neglected. Thus it may fall out.

But now the decay of love is seen in two things:--(1.) The remission of the degrees of love; (2.) The intermission of the acts of love.

1. A remission of the degrees, when the heart groweth cold, list less, and loose; when there is not such a strong tendency and bent of soul towards God as formerly, not such a sense of unkindness, such an awful respect to God, a care to please him, and desire to enjoy him, nor such complacency and delight in the thoughts of God. But now every loss or abatement of degree doth not mount to a leaving of our first love; there are certain ravishments and transports of soul which we feel upon the first evidence of our being reconciled to God, or are stirred up upon other special occasions. These are accidental overflowings, which may come and go; we cannot always bear up under them; new things strangely affect us; love is afterward more settled and diffused in the

channels of obedience, and therefore no wonder if it do not run with so full a tide and current. This remission of degrees, then, must be understood with respect to these constant dispositions of love, as care to please, fear to offend, desire of and delight in God; when these fail us to any degree, love is a-chilling or growing cold.

2. An intermission of the acts and exercise of love, when God is forgotten, duty neglected, sin unmortified, no care of or frequency in private communion with God, no sweet thoughts of him, Ps. lxiii. 6; civ. 34. Where we love there will be musing on the object beloved, there will be familiarity and intimateness of converse. There is not a day can pass but love will find some errand and occasion to confer with God, either to implore his help or ask his counsel. But now, when men can pass over whole days and weeks, and never give God a visit, such strangeness argueth little love. Again, when there is no care of glorifying God, no plottings and contrivings how we may be most useful for him, when we do not mourn over sin as we were wont to do, are not so sensible of offences, have not these meltings of heart, are not so careful to avoid all occasions of offending God, are not so watchful, so zealous, as we were wont to be, do not rise up in arms against temptations and carnal thoughts, love is decayed. Certainly when the sense of our obligations to Christ is warm upon the heart, sin doth not escape so freely; love will not endure it to live and act in the heart, Titus ii. 11, 12, Gen. xxxix. 9. But now, as this is worn off, the heart is not watched, the tongue is not bridled, speeches are idle, yea, rotten and profane; wrath and envy tyrannise over the soul, all runneth to riot in the poor neglected heart; yea, further, God's public worship is performed perfunctorily, and in a careless, stupid manner; sin confessed without remorse and sense of the wrong done to God; prayer made for spiritual blessings without desire of obtaining; wrath

deprecated without any fear of the danger; intercession for others without any sympathy or brotherly love; thanks given without any esteem of the benefits or affection to God in the remembrance of them; conference of holy things is either none at all, or very slight and care less; hearing without attention; reading without a desire of profit; singing without any delight or melody of heart. All this is but the just account of a heart declining in the love of God.

Now as you love your souls beware of this great evil. To this end--

1. Be rooted and grounded in love,' Eph. iii. 17. Do not content yourselves with flashes and good moods and meltings at a sermon, but get solid grace and thorough experiences: glances and sudden affections will come to nothing, Mat. xiii. 4, 5, with xx. 21. A tree that hath taken root is in less danger of withering.

2. Increase and grow in love, 1 Thes. iv. 10. Nothing conduceth to a decay more than contentment with what we have received; every day you should love sin less, self less, world less, but Christ more and more.

3. Observe the first declinings, for these are the causes of all the rest. Evil is best stopped in the beginning; if, when we first began to grow careless, we had taken heed, then it would never have come to this. A heavy body moving downward, vires acquirit eundo, it gathers strength by running, and still moveth faster and faster. Look then to your first breaking off from God, and remitting your watch and spiritual fervour; it is easier to crush the egg than to kill the serpent. He that keepeth a house in constant repair prevents the ruin and fall of it; stop every hole and chink before the mischief spread further.

4. Plead with thy heart. The highest degree of love doth not answer the dignity of Christ, nor the duty that we owe to him; he is to be loved with all the soul, and all the heart, and all the might.' It is a

disgrace to him to give him less; surely he looketh to be much loved again who hath loved us so entirely, and translated us out of darkness into marvellous light,'

5. In case of decay, take the advice the Holy Ghost hath given you, Rev. ii. 5, where three things are required--(1.) Consideration; (2.) Humiliation; (3.) Reformation.

[1.] Consideration: Remember whence thou art fallen,' ponder the case. In examination we compare ourselves and the law together, but in this recollection ourselves and ourselves together. Sadly consider then what a difference there is between thee and thyself, recall former experiences, and say as Job, chap. xxix. 2, 3, Oh! that I were as in months past, in the days when God preserved me, when his candle shined on my head.' Or as the church, Hosea ii. 7, It was better with me than now.' In our serious sequestration and retirements we should have such thoughts as these are:--I was wont to spend some time every day with God; I remember when it was a delight to me to think of him; now I have no heart to pray or meditate, no relish of communion with his blessed majesty; it was the joy of my soul to be at an ordinance, the returns of the Sabbath were welcome to me; but now what a weariness is it! Time was when I had sweet experiences, and the graces of God's Spirit were more lively in me, but now all is dead and inefficacious; time was when a vain thought was burdensome unto me, but now I can away with sinful actions; time was when the mispence of ordinary time was a grief unto my soul, now I can spend the Sabbath unprofitably and never be troubled, &c. Thus should you consider your estate.

[2.] Humiliation, intimated in the word repent.' It is not enough to know yourselves fallen; many are convinced of their collapsed and decayed estate, but do not judge themselves for it in God's presence. Go, bewail it to God, smite upon the thigh, praying for pardon. That is

the notion of the word repent here. It is not enough to repent of gross whoredom, theft, drunkenness; we must repent also of the decays of love. The blind world thinketh we are to repent of nothing but what is publicly odious. In friendship, coldness is taken for a great injury.

Go, arraign thyself before God for growing cold in his love and service.

[3.] Reformation: Do thy first works.' We must not spend the time in idle complaints. Many are sensible that do not repent; some may repent that do not reform; you must not be quiet till you recover your former station. Christ puts Peter upon a treble profession, because of his treble denial, John xxi. 17.

Obs. 4. The next note is from the coupling of these two: The love of God,' and looking for the mercy of Christ unto eternal life.' Thence observe, that love to God will put us upon looking for Christ's second coming, when this mercy is to be dispensed to us. See the like connection elsewhere, 2 Thes. iii. 5, The Lord direct your hearts to the love of God and the patient waiting for Christ.' Two reasons may be given of it:--

1. Love allayeth fear, 1 John iv. 18. Of whom should a Christian be afraid at that day? Of the devil? He is held in chains of darkness, and judged by the saints together with Christ. Of Christ? Shall the members be afraid of their head? the ransomed of their Redeemer? the beloved of their Saviour? Oh! but then he cometh as a judge. But it is to plead their cause, to right their wrongs, to revenge their enemies, to reward their services. If he be then your judge, he hath ever been your advocate hitherto, and surely he that hath interceded for you will not condemn you.

2. Love quickeneth desire: 2 Peter iii. 12, Looking for and hastening to the coming of the Lord;' see Cant. viii. 14, Rev. xxii. 20. A harlot

would have her husband defer his coming, but a chaste spouse thinketh he can never come soon enough. They that go a-whoring after the world, neither desire Christ's coming, nor love his appearing; but the Spirit of the bride saith, Come.' They that love God look for it, Phil. iii. 20, long for it, 2 Tim. iv. 8: they love his appearing.' Corrupt nature saith, Depart,' Job xxii. 14; but grace saith, Come.' The children of God would fain see him of whom they have heard so often, and so much, and of whose sweetness they have tasted. They know him by hearsay and by spiritual experience; but they would fain see his person.

Use 1. This now informeth us what a difference there is between a child of God and wicked men. They wish this day would never come, and would be glad in their hearts to hear such news. The thought of Christ's coming is their burden and torment. They have the spirit of the devil in them: Art thou come to torment us before our time'? Mat. viii. 29. They cannot endure to hear or think of it. If it might go by voices whether Christ should come or no, would they give their voice this way, and say, Come, Lord Jesus; yea, come quickly'? If thieves and malefactors should have the liberty to choose whether the assizes should be kept or no, would they ever fix it, and look for and long for the time of its approach? No, no; but a child of God is waiting and looking for this happy time.

Obj. But now here is an objection. Are Christians always in this frame? What shall we say then to those weak ones that tremble at the thought of it for want of the assurance of God's love, and the best saints that do not always feel such an actual inclination and strength of desire?

Sol. I answer--The meanest saint hath some inclination this way. Can a man desire that Christ should come into his heart, and not come to judgment? Since comfort and reward is more naturally embraced than duty, the first work of grace is to raise us up to this hope, 1 Peter

i. 3; but yet sometimes there may be a drowsiness and indisposition, and then their lamps may not be kept burning, Luke xii. 35. 36. The wise virgins slept as well as the foolish, Mat. xxv. Oftentimes they find themselves indisposed for his coming by careless carriage, remission of their watch, and scattering their love to the creature; yea, much of their old bondage may remain through the imperfection of their love; for it is perfect love casteth out fear.' A wife desireth her husband's coming home, but it may be all things are not ready, and in so good order as they should be. All Christians desire the coming of Christ, but sometimes they are not so exact and watchful, and therefore their affections are not so lively.

Use 2. Here is a note of trial whether we love God or Christ. How do we stand affected towards his appearing? The world cannot satisfy Christians; they look beyond it. In things to come we are apt to feign, and because we have not a sufficient sense of them, we think we have an affection to them when we have them not. If there be looking, there will be preparing. When you expect a great estate for your children, you breed them accordingly; or rather thus, a man that expecteth the coming of a king to his house will make all things ready. Surely you look for nobody when you are not fitting and preparing yourselves. What have you done against this great day? Do you judge yourselves'? 1 Cor. xi. 31. Do you get into Christ, Rom. viii. 1, that you may be interested in Christ's righteousness against you come to undergo Christ's judgment? What purging of heart and life? 2 Peter iii. 11. Art thou in such a case wherein thou wouldst be found of Christ'?

To exhort those that love God to look earnestly for the coming of Christ. To this end:--

1. Consider our relations to him; he is our master, we are his servants, and good servants will wait for their master's coming, Mat.

xxiv. 45. Here we have our meals, but then our wages. It is but present maintenance which we have now; but Behold, I come, and my reward is with me.' Christ will not come empty-handed. Again, he is our husband, we his spouse: The bride saith, Come,' Rev. xxii. 17. We are now but contracted to Christ; then is the day of solemn espousals. The judge is the wicked man's enemy, but your redeemer.

2. Consider the privileges we shall then enjoy. The day of Christ's coming is:--

[1.] A day of manifestation, Rom. xiii. 19. All is now hidden. Christ is hidden, the saints are hidden, their life is hidden, Col. iii. 3, their glory is hidden, 1 John iii. 2; but then Christ shall appear, and we shall appear with him in glory; as Moses told the rebels, Num. xvi., To-morrow the Lord will show who are his.' Christ, as the natural Son, shall then appear in all his royalty and glory, as the great God and Saviour of the world; so shall the saints put on their best robes. In winter the tree appeareth not what it is, the sap and life is hidden in the root; but when summer cometh, all is discovered.

[2.] It is a day of perfection. Everything tendeth to its perfect estate: the little seed that is sown in the ground breaketh through the clods that it may be in flower and perfection; so a Christian is working through, that he may come to an estate of perfect holiness and perfect freedom. Here we are very weak; yea, even to glorified spirits he is but a saviour in part; there is some fruit of sin continued upon the body; but then body and soul are united, and perfectly glorified to praise God in heaven. Christ cometh to make an end of what he hath begun; he came first to redeem our souls from sin, but then our bodies from corruption;' then all privileges are perfect regeneration, Mat. xix. 28. When heaven is new, earth new, bodies new, souls new, that is a regeneration indeed. So adoption: we are sons, but handled as

servants, looking for the adoption.' Rom. viii. 23. So justification: our pardon shall be proclaimed at the market-cross, published before all the world, Acts iii. 19. So for redemption, Luke xxi. 28: the body is a captive when the soul is set at liberty; the body is held under death till that day.

[3.] It is a day of congregation, or gathering together. The saints are now scattered, they live in divers countries and in divers ages, but then all meet in one assembly and congregation, Ps. i. 6; but of these things more largely, ver. 6, on these words, the great day.

Obs. 5. From that looking for the mercy, &c., observe, that looking earnestly for eternal life is a good means of perseverance; for to that end it is urged by the apostle here. I shall inquire--(1.) What this is; looking (2.) What influence it hath upon our perseverance.

1. What this looking is. It implieth patience, but chiefly hope.

p.] Patience, in waiting God's leisure in the midst of present difficulties, Heb. x. 36, Luke viii. 15, 1 Thes. i. 3, Rom. viii. 25.

[2.] Hope. Now, because there is a blind hope and a good hope, a bastard hope and a genuine hope--good hope through grace,' saith the apostle, 2 Thes. ii. 16--let me tell you that this looking or expectation is not that blind hope that is found in men ignorant and presumptuous, that regard not what they do. Presumption is a child of darkness, the fruit of ignorance and inconsideration. When men are once serious they find it a hard matter to fix an advised hope on things to come, for guilty nature is more inclinable to fear than to hope. This blind hope will certainly fail us; it is compared to a spider's web,' Job viii. 14. The spider spinneth a web out of his own bowels, which is swept away as soon as the besom cometh; so do carnal men conceive a few rash and ungrounded hopes; but when death cometh, or a little trouble of conscience, these vain conceits are swept away. This hope which I

press you to is a serious act, arising from grace aiming at its own perfection. Again, this looking is not some glances upon heaven, such as are found in worldly and sensual persons, who now and then have their lucida intervalla, their good moods and sober thoughts, as Balaam, Num. xxiii. 10; a taste they may have, Heb. vi. 4, a smatch of the sweetness of heaven and spiritual comforts; the most wretched worldlings have their wishes and sudden rapts of soul; but alas! these sudden motions are not operative, they come but seldom, and leave no warmth upon the soul, as fruit is not ripened that hath but a glance of the sun, and a sudden light rather blindeth a man than showeth him the way. So these sudden indeliberate thoughts vanish, and leave men never the better. Again, it is not a loose hope or a probable conjecture; this hath no efficacy upon the soul. Men that are under an anxious, doubtful posture of spirit will be very un even in their walkings, James i. 8. When men are discouraged in a race they begin to slacken their pace, to which the apostle alludeth when he saith, I run not as one that is uncertain,' 1 Cor. ix. 26; but when they begin sensibly to get ground, they hold on their course the more cheerfully.

Thus negatively I have shown you what it is not, but now positively; it is an earnest, well-grounded expectation of blessedness to come. It bewrayeth itself--

[1.] By frequent and serious thoughts. Thoughts are the spies and messengers of hope; it sendeth them into the promised land to bring the soul tidings from thence; it is impossible a man can hope for a thing, but he will be thinking of it; by this means we preoccupy and forestall the contentment of what we expect, and feast the soul with images and suppositions of what is to come, as if it were already present. If a beggar were adopted into the succession of a crown, he would please himself in imagining the happiness and honour and pleasure of the

kingly state; so certainly if we did look upon ourselves as heirs of the kingdom of heaven,' and co-heirs with Christ,' we would think of that happy state more than we do, and by a serious contemplation our hearts would carry us above the clouds, and set us in the midst of the glory of the world to come, as if we did see Christ upon his throne, and Paul with his crown of righteousness upon his head, and all the blessed leaning in Abraham's bosom. A carnal expectation filleth men with carnal musings and projects; as Luke xii. 18, dielogi'zetp, he was dialoguing and discoursing with himself of pulling down barns and building greater, of bestowing his fruits and goods. See the like, James iv. 13. It is usual with men to forestall the pleasure of their hopes, as young riotous heirs spend upon their estates before they come in hand. Now, so it is also in heavenly things; men that expect them will be entertaining their spirits with the thoughts of them.

[2.] By hearty groans, and sighs, and longings: Rom. viii. 23, We groan in ourselves, waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our bodies.' They have had a taste of the clusters of Canaan, and therefore long for more; they can never be soon enough with Christ: When shall it once be?' The nearer enjoyment, the more impatient of the want of his company. As the decays of nature do put them in mind of another world, they begin to lift up the head and look out, Rom. viii. 19, apokaradoki'a kti'seos, the earnest expectation of the creature;' the word signifieth the pushing out of the head to see if it can spy a thing a great way off, and noteth the extension of the soul towards the fruition of things hoped for; they would have a fuller draught of the consolations of the Spirit, more freedom from sin, more perfection of grace, &c.

[3.] By lively tastes and feelings. A believer hath eternal life, John xvii. 3; he beginneth it here. Hope is called a lively hope,' not only

living, but lively, 1 Peter i. 3, because it quickeneth the heart, and maketh us cheerful and sprightly: Rom. v. 2, We rejoice under the hope of the glory of God,' Joy is for enjoyment and possession; but yet that prepossession which hope getteth causeth all joy; see 1 Peter i. 8. I confess all feel it not in a like degree, because it dependeth upon a sense of grace, which believers always have not, yet all find a sweetness and some comfort, when they think of what they look for. Worldly hope is but the dream of a shadow; there is pain and trouble in the expectation, and no satisfaction in the fruition.

2. Let me show you the influence it hath upon perseverance.

[1.] It sets us a-work to purge out sin: 1 John iii. 3, Every one that hath this hope purifieth himself as Christ is pure.' The things that we look for are holy; it is a great part of our portion in heaven to be free from sin, and to be consorts of the immaculate Lamb. Can we hope for these things and cherish worldly lusts? If we did, we look for a sensual paradise; then we might indulge our lusts without any defiance of our hopes. But we look for a pure and holy as well as a glorious and blessed estate, and therefore we should begin to purify ourselves.

[2.] It withdraweth our hearts from present things: Phil. iii. 20, Our conversation is in heaven, from whence we look for a saviour.' A man that hath been looking upon the sun findeth his eyes dazzled that he cannot behold an object less glorious; the oftener we look within this veil, the more is the glory of the world obscured. Abraham lived as a stranger in the promised land. Why? Because he looked for a city,' &c., Heb. xi. 9, 10. Deny worldly lusts,' saith the apostle, looking for the blessed hope,' Titus ii. 12, 13. A man who is much in heaven, his affections are pre-engaged, and therefore the world doth him little hurt. Birds are seldom taken in their flight; the more we are upon the wing of heavenly thoughts the more we escape snares. Hope sets the

wheels a-going: Phil. iii. 13, I press onward because of the high prize of our calling.' The thought of the end quickeneth to the use of means; we faint because we do not consider it more, 1 Cor. xv. 58. Heaven will pay for all.

[3.] It maketh us upright and sincere; looking asquint on secular rewards is the cause of all our declinings: Mat. vi. 2, mi'sthon ape'chousi, they have their reward,' [169] Hired servants do not look for the inheritance, and therefore must have pay in hand; if they may have the world and live in honour and pleasure, they will discharge God from all other promises. A sincere man maketh God his paymaster, and that chiefly in the other world, Col. iii. 24; we have a master good enough in him, we need not look for pay elsewhere.

[4.] It supporteth us under those difficulties and afflictions which are wont to befall us in a course of godliness. We can counterbalance what we feel with what we expect; we feel nothing but trouble, and that which we expect is life and glory, Rom. viii. 18, 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18. In this respect hope is called an anchor,' Heb. vi. 19. In the stormy gusts of temptation it stayeth the soul, which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and entereth into that which is within the veil.' It is a weighty anchor, that will not bow or break; and the ground is good; it entereth into that within the veil,' and therefore, though tempests arise, it will keep us from floating and dashing against the rocks. Again it is called a helmet: Eph. vi. 17, The helmet of salvation;' so 1 Thes. v. 8. The helmet is for the head in conflicts. As long as we can lift up our heads and look to heaven, we are safe.

[5.] It helpeth us to resist temptations. Sin maketh many promises, and prevaileth by carnal hope. Balaam was enticed by promises to curse God's people. Babylon's fornications are presented in a golden cup. Men

are corrupted with promises of preferment and greatness and present accommodations. Now hope sets promise against promise, heaven against earth, pleasures at God's right hand against carnal delights and taking our fill of loves;' as one nail driveth out another, so doth hope defeat the promises of the world by propounding the promises of God.

Let us now apply this:--

Use 1. It informeth us that we may look for the reward without sin. Those men would be wiser than God that deny us a liberty to make use of the Spirit's motives, they begrudge God's bounty, To what end should the Lord propound rewards, but that we should close with them by faith? Graces may be exercised about their proper objects without sin; it requireth some faith to aim at things not seen;' the world is drowned in sense and present satisfactions. They are mercenaries that must have pay in hand; their souls droop and languish if they do not meet with credit, applause, and profit; they make man their paymaster. They have the spirit of a servant that prefer present wages before the inheritance; but to do all upon the encouragements of the mercy of Jesus Christ unto eternal life argueth grace. It was a relief to the soul of Christ to think of the reward, Heb. xii. 2. Christ, as man, was to have rational comforts and human encouragements. That is sinful indeed when we would have the reward but neglect the work; when we would be merrcenaii but not operarii, we sever the reward from the duty, and, like Ephraim, are willing to tread the corn,' but not break the clods,' Hosea x. 11. Again, we look amiss upon the reward when we have a carnal notion of heaven; as some Jews looked for a carnal Messiah, so do some Christians for a carnal heaven, for base pleasure and fleshly delights, for a Turkish paradise. Such kind of hopes debase the heart; or else when we look for it as merited by us, as if we could challenge it by our works, then we are mercenaries indeed; it is here

looking for the mercy of Jesus Christ,' &c.

Again, our own happiness must not be our last end. There is a personal happiness that results to us from the enjoyment of God. Now, the glory of God must be preferred before it.

Use 2. If you would persevere in the love of God and a good frame of heart, revive your hopes, and set the soul a-looking and a-longing for eternal life. If we keep the rejoicing of our hope firm to the end,' then we are safe, Heb. iii. 6. Courtiers are more polite in their manners than ordinary subjects, because they are more in their prince's eye and company. The oftener we are in God's court the more holy. Well, then, be as much as you can in actual expectation of this blessedness. To this end--

1. Believe it There is a mist upon eternity to a carnal heart. They are led by sense and reason, and believe no more than is evident to a natural principle; but now faith is the evidence of things not seen,' Heb. xi. 1. Fancy and nature cannot outsee time, and look be yond death. Faith holdeth the candle to hope, and then we have a prospect into the other world, and can see a happy estate to come.

2. Apply it. It is a poor, comfortless meditation to think of a blessed hope and the certainty of it, unless we have an interest in these things. A hungry man taketh little pleasure in gazing upon a feast, when he tastes not of it. The reprobate hereafter are lookers-on; and David speaketh of a table spread for him in the sight of his enemies.' Hope hath never a more lively influence than when we can make out our own propriety and interest: Job xix. 25, I know that my Redeemer liveth;' 2 Cor. v. 1, We know that if this earthly tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building not made with hands, eternal in the heavens;' 2 Tim. iv. 8, Henceforth there is laid up for me,' &c. They do not only believe there is a heaven, but apply it--for me. You will

say, Is hope only the fruit of assurance? I answer--It is the fruit of faith as well as of assurance or experience; but the sense of our interest is very comfortable, and in some sort necessary. Be fore we can hope anything for ourselves, our qualification is to be sup posed. In a matter of such moment a man should not be at an uncertainty. Canst thou be quiet and not sure of heaven? Not to look after it is a bad sign. A godly man may want it, but a godly man cannot slight it. It is possible a man may make a hard shift to creep to heaven through doubts and fears, and may be scarcely saved,' 1 Peter iv. 18, whilst others have an abundant entrance;' but then you lose your heaven upon earth, which consisteth in peace and joy in the Holy Ghost,' and lose much of the efficacy of hope; for uncertain, wavering thoughts work little, therefore assurance cannot be slighted. Further, I add; by showing what application there must be if we cannot attain to assurance; there are three degrees of application beneath assurance: there is acceptation, adherence, and affiance.

[1.] Acceptation of God's offer upon God's terms: Job v. 27, Know thou it for thy good;' put in for these hopes, and take God to his word upon this confidence; make good thy part of the stipation in the covenant, and he will not fail thee. This application there must be in all, in answer to the demands of the covenant, 1 Peter iii. 21, Exod. xxiv. 6-8.

[2.] Adherence. Stick close to this hope in a course of obedience. If we do God's work we shall not fail of wages: 1 Cor. ix. 26, I run not as one that is uncertain.'

[3.] Affiance. Besting, waiting upon God for the accomplishment of this blessedness, though not without some doubts and fears as to our own interest. Though you cannot say it is yours, yet you will cast yourself upon the mercy of God in Christ,' as it is in the text, Looking for the

mercy of Christ.' You dare venture your soul in that bottom. This is that committing yourselves to him as unto a merciful and faithful creator,' which the apostle speaketh of, 1 Peter iv. 19. You will go on with your work, and put yourselves in God's hand for your eternal happiness, because he is merciful, faithful. See also Rom. ii. 7.

3. Meditate on it often. Meditation is a temperate ecstasy, a survey of the land of promise. God biddeth Abraham take a view of Canaan, Gen. xiii. 14, 15. Surely the more we lift up our thoughts in the contemplation of this blessed estate, the more lively will our hopes be. If every morning we spent a thought this way, it would season the heart against the love of present things. The morning is an emblem of the resurrection, when we awake out of the sleep of death, and the day cometh which will never have night more, Ps. xvii. 15. So in time of troubles we should be reckoning upon a better estate, Rom. viii. 18. So, when you are by bodily sickness summoned to the grave, and you are going down to converse with worms and skulls, then think of a blessed eternity, Job xix. 26.

Obs. 6. The next point is from that clause, the mercy. The ground of our waiting and looking for eternal life is God's mercy, not for any works or merits of ours; we cannot challenge it as a debt: sin and death are as work and wages, but eternal life is a donative, Rom. vi. 23. Eternal life is not the wages of obedience, as damnation is the wages of sin. Why, wherein lieth the difference? I answer--Wicked men stand upon their own bottom, but Christ hath obtained this privilege for us. Wicked works are ours, and they are merely evil, the good that we do is imperfect, and God's grace hath the main stroke, so that we are rewarded rather according to what we have received than what we have done. A servant is under a covenant of obedience, and tradeth with his master's estate, he doth but his duty, he deserveth something.

[170] We are bound to do good and forbidden to sin; when we do what is forbidden we deserve punishment, but when we do what is commanded we do not deserve the reward, because we are bound, and because we have all from God's grace: as you must pray for eternal life, so must you look for eternal life.' If you should say, Give me heaven for I deserve it, natural conscience would blush at the immodesty of such a request. It is as great an absurdity when you make your own works the ground of your hope, for in prayer our desires and hopes are put into language, and made more explicit; so that which is our plea in prayer must be the ground of our claim in point of confidence, unless we mean to compliment with God. Well, then--

1. Let this encourage us to wait with hope, notwithstanding infirmities as as well afflictions. What a good master do we serve! He hath provided comforts not only against our misery, but against our unworthiness; not only glory as a reward, but mercy as the cause of it that we may take glory out of the hands of mercy. He looked upon us not only as liable to suffering, but sinning; and therefore, as he hath provided life and safety for us, so upon terms of grace.

2. It showeth us how we should ascribe all to mercy, from the beginning to the end of our salvation. We were taken into a state of grace at first out of mere mercy: 1 Tim. i. 13, elee'then, I was all to [171] be-mercied; Titus iii. 5, Not by works of righteousness that we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us.' He doth not barely say, Not for our works, but Not for our works en dikaiosu'ne, not for our best works, those works of righteousness which might be supposed to be foreseen as done by us. So also when we are taken into a state of glory, it is still mercy, we can merit no more after grace than before: 2 Tim. i. 18, The Lord grant him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day.'

Obs. 7. Once more, this mercy is called the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ. Thence observe, that this mercy which we look for is dispensed by Jesus Christ; he purchased it, and he hath the managing of it in the whole economy of grace: He shall take of mine,' saith he, concerning the Holy Ghost; and in the last day he distributeth to some judgment without mercy,' to others mercy;' they are judged upon gospel terms. Well, then--

1. Get an interest in Christ, otherwise we cannot look for mercy in that great day: 1 John ii. 28, If we abide in him, then shall we have boldness.' They that slight Christ in the offers of the gospel have no reason to look for benefit by him; you will howl and tremble then, and call upon the mountains to hide you from the wrath of him that sitteth upon the throne.' They that prize the mercy of Christ now, they find it to be the very last; mercy, that planted grace in their hearts, will then put the crown upon their heads. Here it was their care to glorify Christ and to honour him, though with the loss of all; there will Christ glorify them in the presence of all the world.

2. It maketh for the comfort of Christ's people and members. Our blessed hopes are founded upon the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in his hands to dispense them. From thence you may collect:--

[1.] The fulness of this blessedness. An infinite merit purchased it, an infinite mercy bestoweth it. Surely the building will be answerable to the foundation. It is no small thing that we may expect from infinite mercy and infinite merit. Would an emperor give brass farthings? Do men that understand themselves give vast sums for trifles?

[2.] The certainty of this blessedness. Christ hath the managing of it. He never discovered any backwardness to thy good nor inclination to thy ruin; he died for thee before thou wert born; he called thee when thou

wert unworthy; warned thee of dangers which thou never fearedst; instead of deserved wrath, showed thee undeserved mercy; intercedeth for thee when thou little thinkest of it; hath been tender of thee in the whole conduct of his providence; visited thee in ordinances; is mindful of thee at every turn, and will he be harsh to thee at last?

The last note is from that clause unto eternal life. The great benefit which we have by Christ is eternal life.

1. There is life; all that you labour for is for life, that which you prize above other things is life: Skin for skin, all that a man hath will he give for his life;' that is, he will part with all things, even to his very skin, to save his life.

2. It is an excellent life. [172] The life of sense, which is the beasts', is better than that vegetative life which is in the plants, and the rational life which is in men is better than the sensitive, and the spiritual exceedeth the rational, and the glorious life the spiritual. Vegetative life is the vigour of the sap, sensitive life is the vigour of the blood, rational life is the union of the soul with the body, spiritual life is the union of the soul with Christ, and the life of glory exceedeth that in degree, for it standeth in the immediate fruition of God.

3. It is a happy life, not subjected to the necessities of meat and drink. We have then spiritual bodies,' 1 Cor. xv. 45. It is not encumbered with miseries as the present life is, Gen. xlvii. 9. It is a life which we are never weary of; in deep distress life itself may become a burden: Elijah said, Take away my life,' 1 Kings xix. 4. But this life cannot be a burden.

4. It is eternal life. This life is but a flower that is soon withered, a vapour that is soon blown over; but this is for ever and ever, as eternity increaseth the torment of the wicked, so the blessedness of

the godly. Well, then, let this press you to keep yourselves in the love of God till this happy estate come about.

[168] This is on the supposition that Nicolas, one of the seven, Acts vi. 5, was the founder of the sect of the Nicolaitans.--ED.

[169] See the Larger Annotations.

[170] Qu. nothing'?--ED.

[171] All to, equivalent to altogether; as in Judges ix. 53.--ED.

[172] Called therefore a crown of life,' Rev. ii. 10.

Ver. 22, 23. And of some have compassion, making a difference: and

others save with fear, putting them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.

Here is the second part of the exhortation, explaining their duty towards others, or teaching them how to behave themselves to them that were gone astray.

Of some have compassion. The Vulgar readeth quite to another sense, and some being reproved.' Beza saith that in some Greek copies he found it ou`s me'n ele'nchete diakrinome'nous; but the reading which we follow is to be preferred; the other is but in few copies, is harsh in construction, and mangleth the whole context: ou`s me'n eleeite on these have mercy.' It is a word that cometh from another word that signifieth bowels, and so noteth not only the gentleness of the censure, but the inward affection, or, as we render it, the compassion which we should have over them. Putting a difference, diakrino'menoi. The word hath many significations, judging, discerning; we most fitly render it according to its usual sense and the apostle s scope.

From the 22d verse observe:--

Obs. 1. That reproofs must be managed with compassion and holy grief; our words must have bowels in them. This is like God: He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men,' Lam. iii. 33. There are tears in his eyes when he hath a rod in his hand. It is like Christ: He wept when he drew near the city,' Luke xix. 41. The Jews were his enemies, and that was the day of his solemn triumph, yet he wept: Oh! that thou hadst known the things of thy peace.' It is suitable to the disposition of God's servants in all ages. Samuel left Saul, but wept for him, 1 Sam. xv. 35. Paul speaketh of very wretches

that made a design of the gospel to gratify their belly concernments: I tell you weeping,' saith he, Phil. iii. 18, 19. There are three grounds of this holy grief:--

1. The dishonour done to God, Ps. cxix. 136. Love will be affected with the wrong of the party loved. If we see a man kill a friend or child whom we love, the sword would pass through our own hearts,' Luke ii. 35. Shall we see them strike at God and not be troubled?

2. The harm and destruction men bring upon themselves, that they have no care of their own souls, Jer. xiii. 17.

3. The proneness that is in our nature to the same sin, Gal. vi.-l. Bernard's good man would weep ille hodie et ego cras--he to-day and I to-morrow: there is no sin in their lives but was in your nature. Well, then, it checketh them that speak of others sins by way of reproof or censure, but with delight or petulancy of spirit; many reproofs are lost, because there is more of passion than compassion in them. It is spiritual cruelty when you can turn a finger in your brother's wound without grief. Reproofs are delightful sometimes out of the sweetness of revenge, or hatred, and ill-will to the persons of men; sometimes out of pride, or a desire to vaunt it and insult over others; sometimes from self-conceit, and non-consideration of our own faultiness. Oh! consider this is not Christian dealing. Paul saith, I am afraid lest, when I come among you, my God will humble me, and that I shall bewail many,' &c., 2 Cor. xii. 21. Many a proud Pharisee would have blustered, and threatened them with the severity of discipline; but Paul was afraid he should have a heavy load upon his own soul.

Obs. 2. Again, and more expressly, observe, that in reproving some must be handled gently: but who are those that must be handled gently?

1. With the most notorious it is good to begin mildly, that they may see our good-will and desire of their salvation, 2 Tim. ii. 25. Hasty

spirits cannot brook the least opposition, and therefore are all a-fire presently. How did God deal with us in our natural condition? with what lenity and mildness? and spake comfortably' to us, to allure us out of the devil's snare, Hosea ii. 14.

2. The persons whom we should treat with much compassion are these:

[1.] The ignorant and seduced. Some are of a simple and weak heart: the young men that went with Absalom went in the simplicity of their hearts, and knew not anything,' 2 Sam. xv. 11. Though swine or dogs be driven with violence, yet poor stray lambs must be brought home, as the shepherd brought home his lost sheep upon his shoulders rejoicing,' Luke xv. Many well-meaning men may err; be not too severe with them, lest prejudice make them obstinate, and so from erring brethren,' they become heretical. [173]

[2.] Those that slip of infirmity. Members must be set in joint' tenderly, Gal. vi. 1. The carnal world reflects with most sharpness upon the infirmities of God's people. The late bishops' courts were chiefly bent against the godly; a drunkard and an adulterer found more favour than a goodly inconformist. Let us learn to distinguish betwixt an evil course and inconsiderate slips, and as long as there is anything of Christ, be not too severe, 2 Thes. iii. 15.

[3.] The afflicted in conscience. We must not speak to the grief of those whom God hath wounded.' The apostle would have the incestuous person comforted, lest he should be swallowed up of too much grief,' 2 Cor. ii. 7. When Adam was troubled, though God reproved him, yet he made him a coat of skins to cover his nakedness; when Peter was weeping, Christ sendeth a comfortable message to him: Go, tell my disciples and Peter,' &c., Mark xvi. 7.

[4.] If they err in smaller matters. We must not deal with motes as with beams, and put the wicked and the scrupulous in the same rank, nor

the gross heretic, and those that mistake in point of church order.
While the judgment is sound in fundamentals, and the practice is reformed, we should use meekness till God reveal the same thing,' Phil. iii. 15, 16. God hath given them light in most things, and those which are most necessary, and in time will discover those truths to them whereof they are yet ignorant.

[5.] The tractable, and those of whom we have any hopes. Rehoboam would deal roughly, and so lost ten tribes. Tertullian was even forced into the tents of the Montanists by the indiscreet zeal of some who were too forward with censures; and still men are lost that otherwise would be reclaimed. Differences are made irreconcileable by the imperious sourness and bitterness of those that manage them. Dashing storms wash away the seed, whereas gentle showers refresh the earth: men left without hope grow desperate.

Obs. 3. From that putting a difference. In all censures and punishments there must be choice used and discretion. Prudence is the queen of graces. Different tempers require different remedies. The prophet saith, Isa. xxviii. 27, in husbandry the fitches are not thrashed with a thrashing instrument, neither is a cart-wheel turned about upon the cummin; but the fitches are beaten out with a staff, and the cummin with a rod;' so all tempers do not need a like dispensation. God himself putteth a difference: some are brought in with violence, others gently. Grace forceth open the door of the heart sometimes, and cometh in like a mighty rushing wind;' at other times it breatheth upon the soul with a gentler blast. Some are caught with guile,' 2 Cor. xii. 16, others directly knocked down. This showeth:--

1. That ministers had need be wise, to know how to suit their doctrine, to distinguish between persons, actions, circumstances. Deep learning, much godliness, and great prudence make an accomplished minister. It

was said of Chrysostom, that he was di' aplo'teta euchare`s too easy, and so did not many times manage things so wisely; and so of Epiphanius, di uperba'llousan eula'beian aplo'ikos on. It is good to be well-read in persons, to note circumstances, and times. Paul striketh in with Felix, treateth of an apt lesson before him and Brasilia, Acts xxv. 25. Felix was a very incontinent person, and very unjust. [174] Paul, to give him his due, treateth of righteousness and temperance and judgment to come.'

2. That ministers should give every one their portion. Zuinglius, when he had flashed terrors in the face of the hardened sinner, would add, Bone Christiane, haec niliil ad te--tender conscience! this is not for thee. We must rightly divide the word of truth,' 2 Tim. ii. 15; that is, not by crumbling and mincing a text of scripture, but giving every one their portion. Terror to whom terror belongeth, and comfort to whom comfort belongeth.

3. It showeth what care we should take to know the state of our flock,' Prov. xxvii. 23, that we may know how to apply ourselves to them, Col. iv. 8, Tychicus was sent to the Colossians to know their state.' It also obligeth private Christians to consider each other's temper, gifts, frame of heart, that we may the better suit ourselves to do and receive good; see Heb. x. 24, 25.

In the 23d verse is the other part of that duty which they owed to straying brethren. And others; those that are of another strain and temper. Save; that is, do your endeavour to be instruments of their salvation: see 1 Tim. iv. 16, Thou shalt save thyself, and them that hear thee.' With fear; that is, by some more severe course; either making the admonition more sharp, or denouncing judgment against them, or by the reverent use of church censures, which were then dreadful, as being solemnly managed and accompanied with some sensible marks of

God's vengeance, 1 Cor. v. 5, anguish of spirit, or possibly torments of body. Pulling them out of the fire. Some make it an allusion to the several ways of purgation, by water or by fire. These latter, like the harder metals, are to be pulled out of the fire; but this seemeth to be forced. Rather it is an allusion to the snatching of a man whom we would save out the fire where he is likely to be burned. We then not only nicely reach out the hand, but pluck them out with violence; or it may be an allusion to Lot's being plucked out of Sodom by angels, Gen. xix. 16. Hating the garment spotted by the flesh. It is a figurative speech; some apply it to the avoiding of the appearance of evil.' There is a story of Valentinian in Theodoret, [175] who, accompanying Julian the Apostate to the temple of fortune, and those that had charge of the house sprinkled their holy water upon the emperor; a drop falling upon his garment, he beat the officer, memolu'sthai phe'sas, ou kekatha'rsai, saying that he was-polluted, not purged, and tore off the piece of his garment upon which the drop lighted, hating,' saith the historian, the garment spotted by the flesh.' But rather the expression alludeth to the old law concerning legal uncleanness: Lev. xv. 4, The bed whereon he lieth is unclean;' and ver. 17, Every garment is unclean;' and therefore I suppose it noteth their avoiding the society of such evil persons, as in the greater excommunication they were wont to do, which separation was a solemn profession how much the church did detest the wickedness.

Obs. 1. There is a time when we may use severity; others save with fear.' Weak physic doth but stir bad humours, not purge them out; nettles, if gently touched, sting the more; fair, plausible lectures do hurt to seared hypocrites. There is a time for the trumpet as well as the pipe. When we pipe to men in the alluring strains of grace, and they dance not, then Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a

trumpet,' Isa. lviii. 1. But who are these others who must be dealt with roughly? I answer:--

1. The seducers themselves. These must be laid forth in their colours, though the seduced must be pitied: see Titus i. 11 with 13, They subvert whole houses, teach things which they ought not; them rebuke sharply.' The prophet flouteth at Baal's priests, 1 Kings xviii. 27; and Christ everywhere giveth the Pharisees their due load: Oh! ye generation of vipers,' and Scribes and Pharisees and hypocrites.'

2. Those that are hardened, and grown perverse and stubborn. When the iron is blunt we put to the more strength; softer strains would but harden these more.

3. Those that are secure libertines, wallowing in sin and pleasure. We had need put them in fear;' though it be distasteful to the flesh, it is healthful for the soul. None hate you worse than those that suffer sin upon you.' If physic gripe the bowels, it is for your good. If the chirurgeon lance and cut you, yet he doth not hate you.

Obs. 2. Observe, this severity must arise from zeal, a desire of God's glory and their salvation. Save them with fear,' saith the apostle, plucking them out of the fire;' see 2 Cor. x. 8, The Lord hath given us an authority for your edification, not destruction,' so that either God will have us use gentle means, or violent to a gentle purpose: Titus i. 13, Rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith.' Well, then--(1.) Take admonitions in good part it is a sharpness needful and profitable; he is not a friend that dealeth mannerly with you when you are in the fire. (2.) It reproveth the undue use of church censures; weighty ordinances are not to lackey upon trifles, nor to be prostituted to carnal ends. The power of the keys' is a great trust, and is to be faithfully managed; we read of abuses of this power in scripture, John ix. 34, and xvi. 2; 2 John 10. The watch men may take

away the spouse's veil, Cant. v.

Obs. 3. Again, observe, that fear is a way to reclaim obstinate sinners. It is sweet to use arguments of love, but sometimes we must lay before men the terrors of the Lord,' 2 Cor. v. 11: Paul, an elect vessel, made use of threatenings, 1 Cor. ix. 27. Surely men have a mind to sleep in sin when they would always have us come in the still voice. Dives was more charitable than they would have us to be; he would fain dismiss a flamy messenger to his brethren, Luke xvi. 27, 28. Sluggish creatures need the goad. In innocency God saw it meet to propound a threatening, and fenced the forbidden fruit with a curse, Gen. ii. 17. If a boisterous lust bear down all milder motives, it is good to scare the soul with threatenings of the law. Fear is good, but the servility or slavishness of it is sinful; fear itself, or a tender sense of God's wrath and displeasure against sin, is so far from being a sin, that it is a grace rightly conversant with its object. God's wrath and vindicative justice is the proper object of fear, and so it must be looked upon by the converted and unconverted. (1.) For the unconverted: It is the great fault and security that they do not consider what a dreadful thing it is to lie under the wrath and displeasure of God, Ps. xc. 11. There is but a step between them and hell, and they mind it not. Tell them of their danger, and they scorn it. (2.) The converted are to fear God's wrath, Mat. x. 28. It is a duty Christ enjoineth to his own disciples. The words do not only contain a description of the person who ought to be feared, but of the ground and reason why he ought to be feared; Fear him who is able to cast body and soul into hell -fire,' is as much as because he is able to cast body and soul into hell-fire,' as appeareth by the antithesis, Fear not them that kill the body,' that is, because they are able to kill the body; see also Heb. xii. 28, 29. Though we are not to fear hell as an evil likely

to fall upon us, when we are assured of God's favour, yet we must fear it, as an evil which God hath power to inflict, and will certainly upon those that disobey him. We are to fear it so as to eschew it, with a fear of flight and aversation, not with a perplexing and doubting fear.

Well, then, so far it is good; but now the servility, that is sinful.

The servility is seen partly in the disingenuity of it, when our own smart and torture is more feared than the displeasing of God, as a slave careth not how his master's goods go to wreck, so he may avoid stripes. Partly because it is accompanied with an enmity against God. Slavish fear hateth God for his holiness, and feareth him for his wrath; they wish his destruction, that there were no God. Partly because it causeth but an incomplete reformation; it makes a man forbear sin, but not hate sin. A wolf may be scared from the prey, that yet keepeth his preying and devouring nature. Partly because there is torment and perplexity in it, 1 John iv. 18. A tender conscience is a blessing, but a stormy conscience is a judgment. Slaves are exercised with the torture and rack of perplexing fears.

Obs. 4. Again, from that pulling them out of the fire. A poor, guilty, secure sinner is like a drunken man that is fallen into the fire. He is so in three respects:--

1. In point of security. A drunkard is ready to be burned, but he feeleth it not; so they are upon the brink of hell, but are not sensible of it: Eph. iv. 19, past feeling.'

2. In point of danger. Sinners are often compared to a brand in the burning,' Zech. iii. 2, Amos iv. 11. They are already under the wrath of God, as a believer hath eternal life whilst he is here in the world. They are in the suburbs of hell, the fire is already kindled.

3. In point of impotency and inability to help themselves. A sottish drunkard, that is overpoised by his own excess, lieth where he falleth,

and except some friendly hand lift him up, there he perisheth; and just so it is with sinners, they are pleased with their condition, and if they be not soundly roused up and awakened, they lie and die, and fry in their sins. Oh! then, pluck them out of the fire, warn them to flee from wrath to come,' Mat. iii. 7. Minister! art thou sensible of the danger of souls? Are thy words as burning coals? Do they fret through the heart of a sinner? Christian! art thou sensible of the danger of thy carnal neighbours? they are burning in their beds, and thou wilt not cry, Fire! fire! they are besotted with lust and error, and wilt thou let them alone? Oh, unkind!

Obs. 5. The next point is from the last clause, hating the garment spotted by the flesh. Some sinners are so unclean that we cannot keep company with them without defilement; see 1 Cor. v. 9-11; 2 Thes. iii. 14; and 2 Tim. iii. 5, From such turn away.' Now, the reason is partly for our own caution. Evils made familiar by a customary converse seem less odious. [176] Partly to vindicate the honour of Christ and the societies of his people. The blemishes of their miscarriages redounds to the whole church, Heb. xii. 15, till they be disclaimed. Partly to punish the offenders, that it may be a means to reduce them, 2 Thes. iii. 14. It is a sad thing to live an outcast from God's people. Let obstinate and scandalous sinners think of it, and let others learn to bear reverence to church censures.

[173] Errare possum; haereticus esse nolo.'

[174] Tacitus saith that he did servili animo exercere imperium, per libidinem et saevitiam.

[175] Theod. lib. iii. 15.

[176] These are spots in your love feasts,' ver. 12.

Ver. 24. Now unto him that is able to Jceep you from falling, and to

present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.

The apostle having persuaded them to duty, now commendeth them to the divine grace, as it is usual with the apostles to shut up their exhortations with prayer, to intimate that the fruit of all must be expected from God, without whose blessing exhortations or endeavours would be nothing.

To him that is able to keep you, it may be referred either to God, or to Christ as Mediator: from falling, aptai'stous, that is, from total apostasy. God is able to keep us altogether from sin, if we speak of his absolute power; but he speaketh here of such a power as is engaged by promise and office. Christ, who is the guardian of believers, hath received a charge concerning them, and is to preserve them from total destruction. And to present you faultless. This clause showeth more clearly that Christ is intended in these expressions; for it is his office to keep the church till it be presented to the Father, and at length will present them faultless; it is, Eph. v. 27, Without spot and blemish.' Before the presence of his glory; that is, at his glorious appearance, Col. iii. 4, when he shall come to judge the world. With exceeding joy is meant rather passively on our part than on Christ's, though it will be a sweet interview between Christ and believers, and he will rejoice to see us, as we to see him.

The observations are these:--

Obs. 1. All means without the Lord's grace will not keep us from falling. The apostle requireth duty of the faithful, but asketh grace of God. He had before said, Keep yourselves in the love of God,' and

now to him that is able to keep from falling,' &c. We fall not because God doth not let go his hold; our necessities and difficulties are so great that nothing less than a divine power can support us: 1 Peter i. 5, Ye are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.' This power of God is set a-work to encourage hope, not to check industry; use means, but look for his blessing. We cannot stand a moment longer than God upholdeth us; we are as a staff in the hand of a man; take away the hand, and the staff falleth to the ground; or rather, as a little infant in the nurse's hand, Hosea xi. 3; if we are left to our own feet we shall soon fall and get a knock; created grace will never hold out against so many difficulties. One of the fathers bringeth in the flesh, saying, Ego deficiam, I shall fail; the world, Ego decipiam, I will deceive them; the devil, Ego eripiam, I will take them away; but God saith, Ego custodiam, I will keep them, never fail them, nor forsake them; and there lieth our safety. The world is full of snares; we are carnal, and there are carnal persons about us, and the devil is a restless enemy watching all advantages; and surely having so much pride in us, and love of pleasures, and so many worldly desires, we give them him but too, too often. Therefore, unless God keep us, we shall be tossed to and fro like feathers with the wind of every temptation.

Obs. 2. Observe, that it is a great relief to faith to consider that God is able to keep us. Accordingly you find it urged in scripture, see John x. 28, 29, 1 Peter i. 5, Rom. xiv. 4, He shall be holden up, for God is able to make him stand.' The two pillars of the temple were Boaz and Jachin, strength, and he will establish; the power of God and mercy of God are the two pillars upon which our confidence standeth. The power of God is a relief upon a threefold account:--

1. Because the great trouble of the soul ariseth from a disbelief of

God's power. We stumble at his can rather than at his will. One said, Mat. viii. 2, Lord, if thou wilt thou canst;' but another said, Mark ix. 22, If thou canst do anything, help us.' When we consider our own infirmities and corrupt inclinations, and the sundry temptations and allurements that we meet with in the world, the many lets and discouragements which befall us in our heavenly course, we think we shall never hold out to the end, so that want of power is our greatest trouble; but when we stay ourselves upon the name of God,' and consider how almighty his power is to bear down all created op position, it is a great relief to the soul.

2. Because the power of God is engaged to help us. It doth not simply follow that because God can keep us, that therefore he will keep us. But God hath promised to keep us, Jer. xxxii. 40; and he hath power enough to make good his word, and therefore we cannot miscarry.

[1.] There is a charge laid upon Christ; we are put into his hands, John x. 28. He hath not only leave to save the elect, but a charge to save the elect; see John vi. 37, 38, 40. They are under his care, and surely he will employ the whole power of the Godhead rather than be unfaithful. He is to be answerable for those that are given to him at the last day.

[2.] The invincible power of God is set a-work by his unchangeable love, so that we may be confident that what he is able to do he will do for us; the power and authority of a relation or friend of ours in court is an encouragement whilst the friendship and relation lasteth.

3. The last reason is because the power of God is many ways exercised for our preservation, partly by way of internal influence, swaying the heart and inclining it to his fear. If the will of man were exempt from the dominion of God, then God had made a creature too hard for himself. Partly in overruling and disposing the temptation, that it shall not be

too great for us: 1 Cor. x. 13, Faithful is God, who will not suffer you to be tempted above what you are able to bear.' Partly, in removing the temptation, rebuking Satan and his instruments, &c. Well, then, commit your souls to Christ with the more confidence: 2 Tim. i. 12, I know whom I have believed, and that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him unto that day.' When the difficulties of salvation are sufficiently understood, there will need explicit thoughts of the divine power before we can with any confidence trust ourselves with Christ, and go on with encouragement in well-doing.

Obs. 3. Jesus Christ will one day make a solemn presentation of his people to God; the apostle saith here he will present you.' There is a threefold presentation spoken of in scripture:--

1. One made by believers themselves, Rom. xii. 1, I beseech you by the mercies of God that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice,' and Rom. vi. 13, Yield yourselves unto God.' paraste'sate eautou`s to Theo. When we consent to set apart ourselves for God's use, to be his in all estates, to act for him in all his businesses, then we are said to yield up or present ourselves to God.

2. By Christ's messengers; they have a charge, and when they have done their work they present us to God: 2 Cor. xi. 2, That I may present you a chaste virgin to Christ.' It is sweet when ministers can say, Here are the fruits of my labours, the pledges of my faithfulness.

3. This presentation is applied to Christ himself. Now two ways is Christ said to present us:--(1.) To himself; (2.) To God.

[1.] To himself, Eph. v. 27, That he might present it to himself a glorious church.' In that place our interest in Christ and his interest in us is represented by marriage; in the world we are contracted, but there presented, actually brought to him when fitted for his use, as Esther when she was chosen out from among the virgins to be wife to the

king, she was first purified and supplied with garments, odours, and sweet ointments out of the king's house, and then when the months of her purification were accomplished, was presented to him, Esther ii. 9-12, so we are chosen,' elected to grace,' and-then purified and prepared, but at the king's cost; we have garments of salvation out of Christ's wardrobe, and odours and sweet ointments out of his store house, and then when spot and wrinkle is done away, we are presented to him; he is said to do it, because he hath the main stroke in this work.

[2.] To God; so it is said, Col. i. 22, That he may present you in his sight;' that is, in the sight of God the Father; for the antecedent you find in ver. 19, It pleased the Father,' &c. Thus Christ is said to give up the kingdom to the Father,' 1 Cor. xv. 24-28; that is, the church, the kingdom is put for the subjects governed. Now Christ's presenting us to God may be looked upon either--

(1.) As an account of his charge. In effect he saith, I have done the work for which thou hast sent me. Christ is under an office and obligation of faithfulness, he hath a trust of which he must give an account; he is to take care of the persons of the elect, to justify, sanctify, and glorify them in his own day. Now that it may appear that he is not unfaithful in his trust, he doth present them to God, as having fully done his work, so that to doubt of his willingness to pardon, or sanctify, or glorify, is in effect to charge unfaithfulness and disobedience upon him; for Christ, as Mediator, is subordinate, he is God's:' 1 Cor. iii. 23, xi. 3, The head of Christ is God,'--namely, with respect to this office and charge; so he is under God and to give an account to him. He hath under taken to make up all breaches between God and us. As to the merit and satisfaction, he gave an account a little before his going to heaven, John xvii. 4; but as to the application to every party concerned, he will give an account in the

last day, when he will present himself and all his flock, saying, Behold I and all the little ones which thou hast given me,' Heb. ii. 13, when all the elect are gathered into one troop and company, and not one wanting.

(2.) As an act of delight and rejoicing in his own success, that all that were given to him are now fit to be settled in their blessed and glorious estate. Christ taketh a great deal of delight to see the proof and virtue of his death, and that his blood is not shed in vain, as a minister taketh delight in those whom he hath gained to God: What is our hope, our joy, our crown of rejoicing? are not ye in the day of the Lord?' 1 Thes. ii. 19. If we rejoice thus in the fruit of our ministerial labours, surely Christ much more; we have not such an interest in them as Christ hath, and the main virtue came from his death and Spirit. It is said Isa. liii. 11, He shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied;' that may be understood either of his foreseeing from all eternity, or of his actual seeing when the whole is accomplished. If you understand it of his foreseeing, the expression is not altogether alien from the point in hand. When Christ foresaw the good success of the gospel, and what a company he should gain to himself in all ages, he rejoiced at the thought of it. Well, saith he, I will go down and suffer for poor creatures upon these terms. But rather I understand it of his sight of the thing when it is accomplished, when he shall see his whole family together, met in one congregation. Now, saith he, I count my blood well bestowed, my bitter agony well recompensed; these are my crown and my rejoicing. Look, as the first person delighted in the fruits of his personal operation, for so it is said, Exod. xxxi. 17, In six days God made heaven, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed;' he was refreshed, not in point of weariness, but delectation; he rejoiced in the product of his

wisdom, power, and goodness; so Christ in the work of redemption, when his death turneth to good account, he will delightfully present you to God as the proof of it. These are those whom I have redeemed, sanctified, and kept, &c.

(3.) It is an act of his love and recompense to the faithful; they have owned him in the world, and Christ will own them before God, men, and angels; there is no saint so mean but Christ will own him: Luke xii. 8, The Son of man shall confess him,' &c. Father, this is one of mine. As for his enemies, Christ will see execution done upon them: Slay them before my face,' Luke xix. 27. To his friends he will own them publicly, and that they be honoured before the presence of his glory.' Well, then, see that you be of the number of those whom Christ will present to God. If he hath purified you to himself,' Titus ii. 14, he will present you to himself. If you be set apart for God, Ps. iv. 3, you shall be brought to God. The work is begun here; privately it is done at our deaths, when the soul, as soon as it is out of the body, is conveyed by angels to Christ, and by Christ to God; and publicly and solemnly at the day of his coming; then he presents the elect as a prey snatched out of the teeth of lions; but spiritually the foundation is laid when you dedicate yourselves to God.' Rom. xii. 1, and walk so as Christ may own you with honour and credit in that great day. If you be the scandal of his ordinances, the reproach of your profession, can Christ glory in you then as a sample of the virtue of his death? Surely no.

Obs. 4. Again observe, that when Christ presenteth the elect he will present them faultless,' that is, both in respect of justification and sanctification. This was intended before the world was: Eph. i. 4, He hath chosen us before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love;' but is not accomplished

till then. Now we are humbled with many infirmities and sins, but then presented holy, unblamable, and unreprovable in his sight,' Col. i. 22. The work is undertaken by Christ, and he will carry it on till it be complete: here the wedding garments are making, but then put on.

1. The work must be begun here; the foundation is laid as soon as we are converted unto God, 1 Cor. vi. 11.

2. This work increaseth daily more and more, 1 Thes. v. 23, 24. We are not faultless; but Christ will not rest till we be faultless, he is sanctifying further and further, that we may be blameless at his coming; he will pursue the work close till it be done.

3. It is so carried on for the present that our justification and sanctification may help one another; the benefit of justification would be much lessened if our sanctification were complete, and our sanctification is carried on the more kindly because the benefit of justification needeth so often to be renewed and applied to us; if our inherent righteousness were more perfect, imputed righteousness would be less set by. In this great imperfection under which we now are, we are too apt to fetch all our peace and comfort from our own works, to the great neglect of Christ and his righteousness; therefore doth the Lord by little and little carry on the work of grace, that by the continual sense of our defects, and the often making use of justification, we may have the higher apprehensions of God's love in accepting us in Christ. The relics of sin trouble us as long as we are in the world, and so the benefit is made new to us, which otherwise would wax old and out of date; and the benefit being made new, increaseth our love to God, Luke vii. 47, and putteth us upon the study of holiness.

4. At the last day all is fully accomplished, Col. i. 22. Well, then, let us wait upon God with encouragement, and press on to perfection

upon these hopes. Surely we shall be faultless; Christ would never have given us earnest, 2 Cor. i. 22, if he meant not to stand to his bargain.

Obs. 5. The next clause is before the presence of his glory. Note thence that Christ's presence at the day of judgment will be exceeding glorious; for he will then appear not only as the Son of man, but as the Son of God, Mat. xvi. 27; he will then appear not only as the saviour but as the judge of the world, both for the terror of the wicked, 2 Thes. i. 8, and as a pattern of that glory which shall be put upon the godly, Col. iii. 4, and Phil. iii. 21. Well, then, let us not despise Christ, now he lieth hid under the veil of the gospel, but with comfort let us expect his coming; for when he is glorious we shall share with him, and appear also in glory.' And let us not think shame of his service, whatever disreputation the world shall put upon it.

Obs. 6. The last particle in the words is that, with exceeding joy. From thence note the day of Christ to the godly is a joyful day. When others howl, you shall triumph; when others are dejected, and call upon the mountains to cover them,' Rev. vi. 16, you shall lift up the head, for your redemption draweth nigh,' Luke xxi. 28. Christ will be glad to see you whom he hath carried in his heart from all eternity, for whose sake he came into the world and died, and for whom he went back again into heaven, that he might negotiate with God in your behalf, and whom he now cometh to receive unto himself, that you may be for ever there where he is. And surely you that have received Christ into your hearts, and loved him though unseen, and served him though with the loss and hazard of all, will be glad to see him in all his glory and royalty, especially when you shall hear him calling upon you, Come, ye blessed of my Father, enter into the kingdom prepared for you.' Oh! that we could act over this joy aforehand. Faith is a bird that can sing in

winter. Before Christ came in the flesh the patriarchs got a sight of him by the eagle-eye of faith, and rejoiced at the thought of it: John via. 56, Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it and was glad.' Oh! surely our hearts should be warmed with the thought of that blessed day when we shall be able to say, Yonder, even there, is our great Lord I

Ver. 25. To the only wise God, our Saviour, be glory and majesty,

dominion and power, now and ever. Amen.

The apostle in this verse goeth on with that doxology which he had begun in the former. Here you may take notice of--

1. The description of the person to whom the praise is given. He is described--(1.) By his excellency, the only wise God; (2.) By our interest and the benefit we receive by him, and our Saviour.

2. The ascription of praise, be glory, &c. There is--

[1.] What is ascribed, glory, majesty, dominion, and power.

[2.] The duration, how long he would have this ascribed, now and ever.

[3.] Manner, in what fashion it is ascribed, in the particle amen, with which all is sealed and closed up. This particle implieth--(1.) Our confidence that it shall be so; (2.) Our hearty affection that it might be so. Love saith, Let it be, and faith, It shall be; for faith is a prophetic grace. In prayer it answereth itself.

But let us go over these particulars more fully and distinctly. From the description of the person, to the only wise God our Saviour. That Christ is God we proved before on ver. 4, and that Christ is a Saviour, and how, on the same verse. I shall only now observe:--

Obs. 1. (1.) That God is wise; (2.) That God is only wise; (3.) That Jesus Christ, as Mediator, hath a right to this attribute.

I begin with the first, that wisdom is ascribed to God. God's wisdom is a distinct notion from his knowledge. He doth not only know all things, but hath ordered and disposed them with much counsel. The wisdom of God is asserted in the word, Job ix. 4, and xii. 13, and proved there by what he hath bestowed upon man: He that teacheth man knowledge, shall not he know?' Ps. xciv. 10. Whatever man hath from God, God hath it in

himself in a more eminent degree; and it is also evidenced by the works of God, as in the works of creation, providence, and the methods of his graces.

1. Much of his wisdom is seen in creation. There his wisdom is discovered in the excellent order of all his works, Ps. civ. 24, 1 Cor. i. 21. Their mutual correspondence and fitness for the several ends and services for which they were appointed. The order of the world showeth the wisdom of God, the order of placing the creatures: see Prov. iii. 19, 20, The Lord by wisdom hath founded the earth, by understanding hath he established the heavens, by his knowledge the depths are broken up, and the clouds drop down the dew.' The earth is set lowermost as the foundation of all the rest, the sea pent up within its channels, the air above them both, and the heavens higher than all, the stars and planets placed in the firmament, and the fishes in the sea. The order of making, God proceeding from things imperfect to perfect; first the rude mass, then the heavens and the vast earth and glorious creatures, but without life; then the herbs and plants, that have life, but not sense and motion; then the brute creatures, that have sense and motion, but not reason; then man, with a reasonable soul, after his own image. In this order you may observe, first, the dwelling-place is appointed, then the food, then the creature that feedeth upon it, the beasts upon the herbs, and man upon the beasts. The Queen of Sheba was astonished at Solomon's wisdom, when she perceived the well-ordering of his family. Certainly, if we did observe the order of nature, we would stand wondering more at the wisdom of God. Next observe the correspondence that is between all the parts of the world, compared sometimes to a building, wherefore God is called techni'tes, an artificial builder,' Heb. xi. 10. In this great house every part conspireth to the beauty, service, and decency of the whole. The roof

is heaven; and therefore the spheres are called chambers and storeys in the heavens,' Amos ix. 6. The foundation is earth, Job xxxviii. 5, 6. The stars and glorious luminaries are the windows, the sea the water-course, &c. Sometimes it is compared to the frame and structure of man's body Heb. xi. 3, The worlds were framed.' It is in the original, katerti'sthai, set in joint, as all the members of the body are tied together by several ligaments, &c. Sometimes to an army: Gen. ii. 1, The heavens were finished, and all the host of them.' Order is necessary everywhere, but especially in a host. There every one must keep in his rank and station. Thus the stars have their courses, Judges v. 20, and the clouds their courses, Job xxxvii. 12, yea, the grasshoppers march in an army, Joel ii. 15. The next thing that showeth the wisdom of God is their fitness for use and service. The workman's skill is as much commended in the use of an instrument as in the making and framing of it. The upper heavens fitted to be the everlasting mansion of the saints, the middle heaven to give us light and heat and influence, the air, the lower heaven for breath, the earth for habitation, the seas for navigation, the herbs and plants for food and medicine, &c. Look upon the bodies of living creatures, and tell me if there be not a wise God. Galen saith there are six hundred muscles in the body of man, and every one fitted for ten uses; so for bones, nerves, arteries, and veins. Whosoever observeth their use, situation, and correspondence of them, cannot but fall into admiration of the wisdom of the maker, who hath thus exactly framed all things at first out of nothing, and still out of the froth of the blood. The wisdom of men and angels cannot mend the least thing in a fly. The figure, colour, quality, quantity of every worm and every flower, with what exactness is it ordered! as if God had nothing else to do but to bring forth such a creature into the world as the product of his infinite

wisdom.

2. Providence; God's wisdom is much seen in the sustentation and governing of all things, Eph. i. 11. He worketh all things according to the counsel of his will.' Do but observe a little how all things are put into a subserviency to God's purpose; sometimes the smallest things occasion events of the highest concernment. The occasion of Joseph's greatness in Egypt was a dream; a lie cast him into prison, and a dream fetched him out. Sometimes the most casual things to us are the most necessary means to accomplish that which God aimeth at: A certain man drew a bow at peradventure, and smote the king of Israel between the joints of the harness,' 1 Kings xxii. 34. Contingencies to us are infallible events as to the purposes of God. Voluntary things that depend upon the will of man, fall under the ordination of the will of God; there is more wisdom shown in ruling a skittish horse than in rolling a stone or dead thing. God showeth his wisdom in guiding the courses of the stars, but much more in disposing the heart of man, Prov. xxi. 1. There is nothing so confused but if you look upon it in its result and final tendency, there is beauty and order in it; the tumults of the world, the prosperity of the wicked, carnal men think them the disgrace and blemish of providence, whereas they are the ornament of it: Ps. xcii. 5, Lord, how glorious are thy works! thy thoughts are very deep.' Man is discontented because he cannot fathom the deep thoughts of providence. Nothing so opposite, so bad, but God can bring good out of it; the sins of men set forth the beauty of providence, as shadows and black lines in a picture set it off the more; see Acts iv. 28, and Job v. 12, 13. Christ hath been beholden to his enemies as much as to his friends; their potent opposition hath occasioned the further increase of his kingdom.

3. In the methods of his grace; so I call all the transactions of God

about the salvation of sinners from first to last; the rejection of the Jews, and calling of the Gentiles: Rom. xi. 33, Oh! the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God;' the various dispensations used in the church, before the law, under the law, and time of the gospel, these are called polupoi'kilos sophi'a, the manifold wisdom of God,' Eph. iii. 10. Redemption by Christ, the great plots of heaven, called the hidden wisdom of God in a mystery,' and without controversy a great mystery,' 1 Tim. iii. 16; that which angels desire to pry into;' God's masterpiece, wherein all things by a rare contrivance are ordered for God's glory and man's good, the wonder of it will take up our hearts to all eternity; to see the ruins of the fall so exactly repaired, the glory of God salved, the comfort of man provided for. O ba'thos--oh! the depths of this glorious mystery.

Again, the various acts of love whereby God subdueth sinners to himself; this taking sinners in their month, and disposing of unthought-of circumstances and passages of providence in order to their conversion. Once more, the overruling of all events to further the eternal blessedness of the saints, Rom. viii, 28. In all these I have foreborne particular illustrations, that the discourse may not swell up into too great a bulk.

Now, whosoever shall seriously consider these things, will certainly conclude God is wise. But further, consider the usual concomitants of God's wisdom, and then we may come to make some use of this meditation. Wisdom in God is accompanied with immaculate holiness and in finite power. In the devils there is great cunning, great power, and much wickedness; in man there is much shame, little power, and less wisdom. God's power and wisdom are often counted [177] in the expressions of scripture: Job ix. 4, He is wise in heart, and mighty in power;' so Job xxxvi. 5, He is mighty in strength and wisdom,' the two formidable

properties in an adversary, [178] and the desirable properties in a friend; so see 1 Cor. i. 25. Again, it is joined with holiness; he is most wise, and most holy, glorious in holiness,' and rich in wisdom.

Use 1. Well, then, let us often admire the wisdom of God; look up to the heavens, and what do you find there? The work of a wise God, Jer. x. 12. Look to the structure of all things round about you, and what offereth itself to your thoughts? By his wisdom he hath established the world.' Look within you, and you cannot choose but say, O God! I will praise thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made,' Ps. cxxxix. 14. Look into the scriptures, and consider the stupendous mysteries that are revealed there; of the Trinity in unity, God manifested in our flesh, a virgin conceiving, Christ dying; and can you hold from crying out, Oh! the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!' Rom. xi. 33. View these things again and again; we cannot take up all of God in one or many or all our meditations.

Use 2. Let not it be a bare speculation, but improve it. (1.) To quicken you to prayer; where should we go for wisdom when we need it, but to the wise God? See Job xxviii. 12, James i. 5, Job. xxxii. 9. Solomon asked wisdom and had it. (2.) Improve it to thanks, when you are able to discern your way and your work, Prov. ii. 6. (3.) Improve it to waiting: Isa. xxx. 18, He is a God of judgment; blessed are all they that wait for him.' When things grow cross, let the wise God alone till you see the end of his work; will you be his counsellor, and teach him how to manage his affairs? He knoweth how to deliver the godly,' &c., 2 Peter ii. 9. (4.) Improve it to patience and contentation; the wise God knoweth how to make use of thee in every condition; wherever thou art, say, I am there where God hath set me. God knoweth what is better for me than I do myself. He that hath put all things in their places hath put me in this place, and here I will glorify him, 1 Cor.

xii. 20. Every cross is chosen and elected as well as your persons.

There are secrets of wisdom' in providence, that are not always to be found in the surface and outside of it, Job xi. 6. Though it appear in a way of rigour, yet God may have a design in it of mercy to me and glory to himself.

Obs. 2. The next point is, that God is only wise: see the same expression, 1 Tim. i. 17, and Rom. xvi. 27. Why, you will say, this is a communicable attribute; God hath endowed man with a spirit of wisdom, and human prudence is an emblem and resemblance of divine providence, how then is God only wise? I answer--Wisdom in God is in such an infiniteness and excess that wisdom in man is but folly in comparison of it: there is none wise as he, there is none wise but from him; in short, God in three respects is only wise:--

1. Originally and independently wise, not by communication from another, but of himself. Our wisdom is but a ray communicated from the father of lights,' James i. 17, a drop from the ocean, a beam from the sun; the whole knowledge of the angels is but a spark of this light.

2. God is essentially wise, and so only wise. Do not understand God to be wise as if wisdom had made him wise, as it happeneth among the creatures; in them wisdom is a separable quality, distinct from their essence. Now God's wisdom is himself, and himself is his wisdom. The perfections of the creature are like the gilding which may be laid on upon vessels of wood or stone, the matter is one thing and the varnish or ornament is another; but the perfections of God are like a vessel made of pure beaten gold, where the matter and the splendour or adorning is the same.

3. God is infinitely wise, and so only wise. As the candle giveth no light when the sun shineth, our wisdom is bounded within narrow limits, and extendeth but to a few things, but God's to all things. We count

them fools that can only manage petty matters, buy and sell and keep out of harm's way. Such fools are all creatures to God, whose wisdom is unlimited and incomprehensible. They that can manage a small commonwealth with advice and counsel are cried up for wise men; but now God manageth the affairs of the whole world, both visible and invisible. He careth for all things, from the ant to the angels, nothing so small as to escape his knowledge, nothing so great as to burden his mind. The sun doth with the same easiness shine upon the whole world as upon one field, so doth God manage the government of the whole world as of one person or creature. Our wisdom is gotten by learning, but who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord?' Isa. xl. 13. Our wisdom is bettered by experience, therefore old men are most prudent; but God's wisdom is incapable of increase, as being in an infinite fulness. We are often deceived. Men of the greatest sagacity and cunning fail in their plots and enterprises, and so their wisdom is turned into folly;' but it is not so with God, his counsel shall stand,' Ps. xxxiii. 11. There can no difficulty occur but what is foreseen. He goeth not upon probability and conjecture, but certain foreknowledge. Man can attend but upon one care at once; various thoughts scatter the mind, and weaken it; but God in one moment of understanding seeth all things, and wisely disposeth of all things. God's wisdom doth not deliberate with hesitancy, or consult with doubt; his thoughts are simple, and not successive, and in the way of discourse. Thus you see what good reason there is why God should be said to be only wise.

Well, then, let not the creature seem wiser than God, and cavil at what he hath revealed, because we understand it not. We cannot know the nature of an ant, we are puzzled in the least creature; no wonder, then, if human reason grow giddy when it pryeth into the depths of God.

There should be upakoe` pi'steos, the obedience of faith,' to all that is revealed; and divine truth, like pills, must be swallowed rather than chewed, received upon God's single authority, when we see no reason for them, for God is only wise.' Again, when you think of the perfections of God, you must raise your thoughts above the law and manner of all created beings.

Obs. 3. The next point is, that Christ Jesus our Saviour is worthy to be accounted the only wise God. Christ is wise as he is God, and as he is man.

1. As he is God, so he is called the wisdom of the Father,' 1 Cor. i. 24, and represented to the ancient church under this title; as Prov. i. 20, and Prov. viii., per totum. Wisdom is there spoken of as a person, and the descriptions there used are proper to Jesus Christ. Some suppose the heathens had some traditional knowledge of this mystery and appellation; for as Christ, the wisdom of the Father, was eternally and ineffectably begotten in the divine essence, so they worshipped a goddess, whom they called the goddess of wisdom, and feigned that she was begotten by Jupiter, of his own brain, and they called her Athene, which word is much like in sound with the Hebrew word, Adonai, Lord,

2. As he is man, he received the habits of all created knowledge and wisdom, as all other graces, without measure, John iii.; and so it is said, Col. ii. 3, In him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.' Well, then, since Christ hath brought down wisdom to us in our own nature, let us be more studious to get it into our hearts. As Mediator, he is fitted to make us wise to salvation, and appointed by God to be wisdom to us, 1 Cor. i. 30.

Obs. 4. Once more note, from the other title that is here given to Christ, our Saviour. Those that have had any benefit by Christ will be very much affected with his praise. There is a double ground of

exalting Christ--a sight of his excellency, and a sense of his benefits; and there is a double notion by which our honouring of Christ is set forth--praise and blessing. Praise hath respect to his excellency, and blessing to his benefits, Eph. i. 3. We may praise a man for his worth, though we have no benefit by him; and so we are bound to praise God for the excellency of his nature, though he had never done us good. But now, when he is our God and our Saviour,' and hath showed us so much of his goodness and mercy in Christ, we should be ever praising him: Phil. iv. 20, Now unto God and our Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.' Glory is due to him as God, much more as our Father. His worth and excellency, though he were a stranger to us, doth deserve an acknowledgment; but when we consider what he is to us, and what he hath done for us, then we can hold no longer, the heart being affected with a sense of his kindness, breaketh out, To our Father, to our Saviour,' be glory for ever and ever. Well, then, consider the Lord's excellences more, and observe his benefits, and work them upon the heart till you be filled with a deep sense of his love, and find such an impulsion in your spirits as you cannot hold from breaking out into his praise.

Obs. 5. I come now from the description to the ascription, to him be glory, &c. Can we bestow anything upon God? or wish any real worth and excellency to be superadded to him? I answer--No. The meaning is, that those which are in God already may be:--

1. More sensibly manifested: Isa. lxiv. 2, Make thy name known among the nations.' It is a great satisfaction to God's people when anything of God is discovered; they value it above their own benefit and safety; see Ps. cxv. 1. They prefer the glory of mercy and truth before their deliverance.

2. More seriously and frequently acknowledged. It is a great pleasure

to the saints to see others praise God: Ps. cvii. 8, Oh! that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men.'

3. More deeply esteemed, that God may be more in request, more in the hearts of men and angels. God's children do not count it enough that God is glorified by themselves, but they desire also that God may be glorified by others. As fire turneth all things near it into its own nature, so is grace diffusive. Good men are loath to go to heaven alone, they would travel thither by troops and in company.

But let us more particularly take a view of this ascription, and so first what is ascribed, glory, majesty, dominion, and power. Let us open these words. Glory is clara cum laude notitia, excellency discovered with praise and approbation, and noteth that high honour and esteem that is due to Christ. Majesty is the next word, which implieth such greatness and excellency as maketh one honoured and preferred above all, therefore a style usually given to kings; but to none so due as unto Christ, who is King of kings, and Lord of lords.' The third term is dominion, which implieth the sovereignty of Christ over all things, especially over the people whom he hath purchased with his blood. The last word is power, which signifieth that all-sufficiency in God, whereby he is able to do all things according to the good pleasure of his will.

From hence observe:--

Obs. 6. A gracious heart hath such a sense of God's worth and perfection, that it would have all things that are honourable and glorious ascribed to him; therefore are divers words here used. When we have done our utmost we come short; for God's name is exalted above all blessing, and above all praise,' Neh. ix. 5. Yet it is good to do as much as we can. Love to God will not be satisfied with a little praise:

I will praise him yet more and more,' Love enlargeth the heart towards God. If there be anything more excellent he shall have it. Well, then, it is a sign of a dead heart to be a niggard in praises, to be sparing, careless, or cold this way.

Obs. 7. When we think of God, it is a relief to the soul to consider of his glory, majesty, dominion, and power; for this is that which the apostle would have to be manifested, acknowledged, and esteemed in God, as the ground of our respect to him. It encourageth us in our service. We need not think shame of his service, to whom glory, and power, and majesty, and dominion belongeth. It hearteneth us against dangers. Surely the great and glorious God will bear us out in his work. It increaseth our awe and reverence. Shall we serve God in such slight fashion as we would not serve the governor? Mal. i. 8. It is a lessening of God's majesty. You do not treat him as a great and glorious potentate,' Mal. i. 14. It inviteth our prayers. To whom should we go in our necessities but to him that hath dominion over all things, and power to dispose of them for the glory of his majesty? It increaseth our dependence. God is glorious, and will maintain the honour of his name, and truth of his promises. When we are daunted by earthly potentates, it is a relief to think of the majesty of God, in comparison of which all earthly grandeur is but the dream of a shadow. Again, God, that hath a sovereignty over all things, and such an almighty power to back it, will not be wanting to do that which shall make for his glory.

Obs. 8. The next consideration in this ascription is the duration, now and ever. Thence note:--The saints have such large desires for God's glory, that they would have him glorified everlastingly, and without ceasing. They desire the present age may not only glorify God, but the future. When they are dead and gone the Lord remaineth; and they would

not have him remain without honour. They do not take death so bitterly, if there be any hopes that God will have a people to praise him. And their great comfort now is the expectation of a great congregation,' gathered from the four winds, united to Christ, presented to God, that they may remain with him, and glorify him for evermore. It is the comfort of their hearts to see this congregation a-making up every day, that there are saints and angels to praise God, whilst others grieve and dishonour him. They prize their own salvation upon this ground, that they shall live for ever to glorify God for ever: see Eph. iii. 21; Ps. xli. 13, and cvi. 48. Now this they do, partly from their love to God's glory, which they prize above their own salvation, Rom. ix. 3; partly in thankfulness to God for his everlasting love to them. God is from everlasting to everlasting, and his love is from everlasting to everlasting, Ps. ciii. 17. He was their God, and will be their God for ever and ever, and therefore they purpose to be his people, and to praise him for ever and ever. Well, then, get these large desires for God's glory, that he may be honoured in all ages, and in all places, Ps. cxiii. 2, 3. What have ye done in a tendency hereunto, that posterity may praise God? Do you labour to promote the knowledge of Christ, and the succession of churches, all the ways that you can? Zeal in your place is a good argument that you are well-affected in this kind. As a master of a family, hast thou taken care to keep religion alive among thy children when thou art dead and gone? Gen. xviii. 19. As a merchant, hast thou promoted religion with thy traffic? Deut. xxxiii. 18, 19. As a magistrate, dost thou take care to secure the interest of Christ to posterity, that the succession of churches may not be cut off? Ministers, have you been witnesses for God to the present age, and behaved yourselves as trustees for the next age? have you taken care that God may be honoured then? that we do not transmit

prejudices against the ways of God, and corruptions in doctrine and worship to posterity? Oh! where is this affection, this wishing, To him be glory, now and ever?'

The last thing in this inscription is the particle, amen, which is signaculum fidei et votum desiderii nostri; it signifieth a hearty consent to God's promise, and a steady belief that it will continue to all generations. This word is often put at the end of prayers and doxologies in scripture; see Rev. v. 13, 14, Rom. xvi. 27, Phil. iv. 20, &c.; and sometimes it is doubled for the greater vehemency, Ps. li. 13, lxxii. 19, lxxxix. 52; and it seemeth by that passage of the apostle that anciently it was audibly pronounced by the people in public assemblies at the conclusion of prayers, 1 Cor. xiv. 16, and since that Jerome telleth us that amen ecclesiae instar tonitru reboabat--that the amen was so heartily sounded out by the church, that it seemed like a crack of thunder.

Obs. 9. Certainly it is good to conclude holy exercises with some vigour and warmth. Natural motion is swifter in the end and close; so should our spiritual affections be more vehement as we draw to a conclusion, and when the prayer is done, put out the efficacy of our faith and holy desires in a strong Amen, that it may be to you according to the requests of your hearts, and you may come away from the throne of grace as those that have had some feeling of God's love in your consciences, and are persuaded that he will accept you, and do you good in Jesus Christ.

Obs. 10. Again observe, there should be an amen to our praises as well as to our prayers, that we may express our zeal and affection to God's glory as well as to our own profit. Many with the lepers will say amen to Jesus, master, have mercy upon us;' but we are not as ready to say amen to this, To whom be glory,' &c. Our hallelujahs should sound as

loud as our supplications, and we should as heartily consent to God's praises as to our own requests.

Obs. 11. Lastly, in desiring the glory of God to all ages, we should express both our faith and love--faith in determining that it shall be, and love in desiring that it may be so with all our hearts. Both are implied in the word amen; it will be so whatever changes happen in the world. God will be glorious. The scene is often shifted, and furnished with new actors, but still God hath those that praise him, and will have to all eternity. Well, then, let your faith subscribe, and put to its seal, To the glory of God in Christ; and let earnest love interpose: Lord, let it be so; yea, Lord, let it be so. Heartily desire it, and with the whole strength of your souls; set to your seals without fear, it is a request that cannot miscarry, and follow it with your hearty acclamations. The world shall continue no longer when God shall have no more glory by it. Here you may be sure you pray according to God's will, and therefore may take it for granted; only follow it earnestly; say, Lord, whatever become of us and our matters, yet let thy name be glorified: Amen, Lord, let it be even so. Now Blessed be his glorious name for ever, and let the whole earth be filled with his glory: amen, and amen,' Ps. lxxii. 19.

[177] Qu. united'?--ED.

[178] Dolus an virtus quis in hoste requirit.'

THE EPISTLE DEDICATORY.

OR,

HOPES OF UNITY IN AND BY DIVIDED AND DISTRACTED TIMES:

DISCOVERED IN A SERMON PREACHED BEFORE THE HONOURABLE

HOUSE OF COMMONS, AT MARGARET'S, WESTMINSTER,

ON THEIR SOLEMN DAY OF FAST, JUNE 30, 1647.

To the Honourable House of Commons assembled in Parliament.

THAT which was preached by your command is now published. When the great voice saith, Come up hither, it is an evil modesty to hide among the stuff. In these busy times they are happy to whom God hath vouchsafed the shelter of an obscure privacy; yet, upon a call, we should not consult with our own ease and quiet. The times are violent and blasting, and this poor endeavour is likely to undergo several misconstructions; but, I thank God, lam learning to pass through good report and evil report, 2 Cor. vi. 8, and to disvalue censure when it seizeth upon me in the way of duty. I have dealt freely and impartially against the miscarriages of both parties, and, happily, [179] my liberty may displease some; others may look upon the things offered here as too low and trivial, and not weighty enough to reach the end of the design. Let them remember the intent of these proposals is only to engage to a further consultation about the matter. The entire discourse were fitter for a treatise than a sermon; and yet something is offered which, by the blessing of God, may be serviceable to reduce men from their violences and extremities to some better temper and moderation. Some possibly may dislike the whole design; spirits now are very keen and exasperated; men think it will be a cooling of their zeal if we should a little take off their edge and sharpness: fire will not be

quenched without hissing. To these I shall only profess, that if I know mine heart, I abhor all such moderation and compliances as will not stand with Christian zeal, and may disadvantage truth and religion: whatever become of my own party, I would be faithful and true to that interest. I know that as it is hard to be moderate without danger, so also without sin. Men of middle interests do always displease men, and they should be careful they do not displease God. There are many counterfeits of Christian moderation; a cold, or, at best, a tepid indifferency, lukewarm Christians may easily middle it. Carnally-wise neutrality; it is no wonder to see men that observe the times neither hot nor cold. A doubtful uncertainty; dipsuchoi are akatastatoi, double-minded men are unstable, James i. 8, and their compliance is promiscuously dispensed. Some possibly may have so much of child and self in them as to mind church-peace only as a taking theme, and speak for it rather from their brain than their heart; others may (like him in Daniel) deal deceitfully, and press a league that they may become strong with a small people, mind moderation for their own advantage; some, out of a desire of their carnal ease and quiet, may be against stirs. I foresaw these rocks, desired grace to avoid them; therefore I hope nothing will be found here to occasion any such prejudice and suspicion against this endeavour. However it speedeth abroad, you were pleased to honour it with acceptance, and to do something upon it, which I hope you will revive again when it shall comport with the times. I shall desire God to guide you in that and other your great affairs. The Wonderful Counsellor be with you in all your straits, make you understanding men of the season, careful to apply apt remedies to the distempers of it.

So prayeth your meanest servant in the Lord's work,

Thomas Manton.

Chapter 28

MEAT OUT OF THE EATER.

In that day there shall be one Lord, and his name one.--Zech. XIV. 9, latter part.

THE whole chapter, but chiefly the context immediately preceding, is spent in the description of a wonderful day, which, ver. 7, is said to be one day; that is, one entire period and joint of providence; for, in the manner of prophetical speech, days are many times put for years, or most usually for such whole entire dispensations and periods of providence as continue without interruption and eminent alteration, though perhaps for many years; for a day, being the natural distinction of time (those of years, hours, and months are artificial) most observed and used by the Hebrews in their computes, and that only space of time which continueth without visible alteration, is very properly used in this case. Thus why day. But then, ver. 9, it is called the day of the Lord;' it is called so because of the glorious appearances of Christ in his power and sovereignty, and because, I suppose, the evening of the day here spoken of will end with the coming of the Lord, and all his saints with him, in glory to judge the world. This day is described, ver. 6, 7:--

1. By its beginning and progress.

2. By its end and close.

1. Its beginning and progress for a long while is dubiously interchangeable: The light shall neither be clear nor dark; it shall be neither day nor night;' that is, there shall be a sad conflict between truth and error, misery and happiness (for they are often expressed by light and darkness in scripture), and such a mutual vicissitude and alternate succession of each to other, that a man cannot tell which

shall have the upper hand. All the comfort is, this day is known to the Lord;' that is, cometh by his appointment, and hath a special mark and seal of providence upon it; and but one day, a providence of the shortest size, sad and short, an uncertain day, a day known to the Lord--and but one day.

2. For the evening and close of it, it is said, in the evening it shall be light;' that is, peaceably glorious: truth shall gain upon error, happiness upon misery, and all former distractions and miseries shall be hushed and gone, for it is light as comfortable and as much day as you would have it. The comfort and happiness of this glorious evening is set forth in three things:--

[1] The propagation of the gospel.

[2.] The reign of Christ.

[3.] The unity of the churches.

[1.] The gospel shall be propagated and the knowledge of it diffused far and near; that is implied in the 8th verse: Living waters shall go out from Jerusalem towards the former and latter sea,' &c.; that is, gospel refreshments, the doctrine and knowledge of Jesus Christ, together with plenty of gifts and graces, shall be diffused and scattered abroad among all nations, who are here hinted at in those expressions of the former and latter sea, which allude to the watery borders of Palestina, which were the Lake of Sodom and the Mediterranean. Now it is usual in the scriptures to set out the evangelical church by terms proper to the Jewish border.

[2.] The next privilege of those times is in the beginning of the 9th verse, And the Lord shall be king over all the earth.' Why! you will say, the Lord is so always; Christ was long since inaugurated into the kingdom, and hath for many ages actually administered it in the world. But the meaning is, he shall show himself to be king, he shall be known

to be king; it is not spoken in regard of right or actual administration, but in regard of sense and apprehension. He will show it partly by his providence and his own dispensations, partly by doctrinal discoveries in the church; men shall more distinctly hold of the head,' Col. ii. 18; Phil. ii. 10, 11; partly in the adoration and acknowledgments of men; every knee shall bow to him, and every tongue and language call him Lord;' all shall ascribe to him sovereignty; the Lord shall be king,' and, it is added, over all the earth;' not only over a few churches, but over all nations. Christ will show himself in the largeness of his power, not only as king of saints,' Rev. xv. 3, but as king of nations,' Jer. x. 9; as head to the church,' but yet so as over all things,' Eph. i. 22; ruling both with his golden sceptre and also his iron mace. This will be the state and happiness of those times; you will see Christ upon his throne in all his royalty and glory.

[3.] The next privilege is the unity of the churches: in the words of the text, The Lord shall be one, and his name one.

By this view we have found the words to be the third privilege of the glorious evening. Observe in them:--

(1.) The time, in that day.

(2.) The blessing, which is unity, The Lord shall be one, and his name one. Which words do hint--

(1st.) The cause of this unity, there shall be one Lord, a joint subscription and submission to Jesus Christ.

(2d.) The measure of it, one name, such a unity and conspiring together in the worship of Christ, that all names and badges of distinction shall be taken away.

This resolution of the text doth somewhat open it to you. But let us go upon the words more expressly and directly.

In that day; that is, the day spoken of ver. 1, described ver. 6, 7. What this day is, is somewhat doubted. Most grant it cannot be taken properly, as if all these things could be transacted in the space of twenty-four hours, though indeed some be so fond as to interpret all these things in the rigour of the letter; but what is intended then? I shall only mention the most probable opinions. Some refer it to the first times of Christianity and the dawnings of the gospel in the world; but sure that is a mistake, for it must be such a day whose morning is miserably troublous, whose evening is eminently glorious, which will hardly agree to those times. Others refer it to the day of judgment; but though the evening of this day hath no end till then, yet I conceive that is not intended, for these happinesses here mentioned--of the propagation of the gospel, the acknowledgment of Christ's sovereignty, and the peace of the churches, &c. though rare and high privileges, yet are somewhat lower than those dispensations which Christ will give out at the day of judgment. Others refer them to the times of the calling of the Jews, and the church's recovery from the apostasy and defection of Antichrist; some more yet more particularly to the destruction of the last enemies, and those secrets about Gog and Magog. For the present, because I drive at other things, I shall forbear the thorough disquisition of this matter, and shall only generally and safely refer the words to some latter providences, probably the times most nearly preceding the day of judgment; for I conceive this text is exactly parallel to those promises that are everywhere in scripture said to be fulfilled in the latter days, and speak of so much glory and sweetness as then shall be exhibited and dispensed to the world; therefore, if we will know what this day is, let us know what is intended in that expression, the latter days.' It is used either:--

1. More largely, for all that efflux of time and succession of ages between Christ's ascension and his second coming to judge the world. All that time in scripture is looked upon as the latter days, for so the times immediately after Christ are expressly called, Acts ii. 15; and I remember the apostle Paul calleth his times the ends of the world,' 1 Cor. x. 11; the reason of which expressions is, because after Christ's ascension there is no change of dispensations, as there was before, from the law natural to the law of tables, and from the law of tables to the gospel; but now beyond this time there is nothing but the everlasting state: There remaineth no more sacrifice for sin,' Heb. x. 26, no other ways of salvation to be expected beyond the gospel; this is the largest sense, which not being noted, hath occasioned some mistakes.

2. More strictly for that space of time that immediately precedeth the world's ruin, and that is to be considered in its morning and evening.

[1.] In its morning or former part, which is everywhere in scripture made to be of a dismal and doubtful appearance, and therefore do we so often hear of the evil of the latter times--days full of delusion and desolation, a world of delusion and error there is then: 1 Tim. iv. 1, The Spirit speaketh expressly that, in the latter days, men shall depart from the faith, and give heed to seducing spirits.' God hath expressly foretold what will be the fate of those times. So for desolation, 2 Tim. iii. 1 In the latter times there shall come hard or perilous times,' kairoi cha'lepoi, times of great difficulty and distress.

[2.] In its evening or latter part, which is bright and glorious, and therefore do we so much hear of the goodness of the latter days; as Hosea iii. 5, They shall make haste to fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days.' So of safety;' no provoking briar,' no pricking

thorn,' Ezek. xxviii. 24. So also Isa. ii. 1, The mountain of God, above all mountains, in the latter days;' that is, above the reach of opposition and violence. Look, as there is a morning light that goeth before the sunshine, so there are some streaks of glory, and times grow better and better as they draw nearer and nearer to the great day of the Lord. I have done with that expression, in that day.

2. The next is there shall be one Lord. Hitherto there have been divers lords. The heathens had their several deities, the Turks their Mahomet, the Jews their imaginary Messiah, the Papists their lord the Pope. Many nations do not as yet call Christ Lord: Other lords have dominion over them,' Isa. xxvi. 13. But then Jesus Christ shall be the person acknowledged; he shall be acknowledged alone, he shall be acknowledged as Lord. All this is included in the expression, that Christ alone shall be spoken of, invocated, and adored in all the churches; they shall be subjected to him as the only king, and guided by him as the only shepherd,' Ezek. xxxiv. 23; hold of him as the only head, and stand to his appointment as the only lawgiver, James iv. 12. And, indeed, here is the ground of all; for it is unity of religion that begetteth unity of affection; the one Lord causeth the one name. When men have one king, give themselves up to the will of Christ, and have one shepherd, guided by the spirit of Christ, and have one lawgiver, are willing their opinions should stand or fall at the appointments of Christ, then will there be a sweet and happy agreement.

3. The last clause to be examined is that, his name one. At first I conceived the meaning to be that men should look only at one power and dignity whereby to endear themselves to the respects of God, and thought the expression parallel to these scriptures: Acts iv. 12, That there is no other name given under heaven whereby we must be saved,' but only by Jesus Christ, this is the one name; or that, Phil. ii. 10,

That at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow.' But considering it more seriously, I saw the necessity of another sense, for this is but the result and effect of the former phrase. Now it seems to be added for the greater emphasis and aggravation of the mercy, that there should be not only one Lord, but one name; therefore, what is intended? There are divers acceptions of the name of God in scripture. That which I conceive most proper is, when it is taken for worship, the way of our religion and profession; as Micah iv. 5, All people will walk every one in the name of his God, but we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever;' that is, several people have their several distinct ways of worship and profession, and the reason why the scripture useth this word in this matter is because men are called and named after the way of their worship and profession; thus the holy worshippers are called Christians from Christ, and Mahometans from Mahomet, &c.; and, among Christians, men are called according to their distinct way and chief opinion, as Papists, Socinians, Arminians, &c. Well, then, it is promised here that there shall be one name; that is, as one Lord, so one way of worship and badge of distinction. We see now, and we may bewail it; that among the holy people there are distinct names, as Lutherans, Calvinists, Presbyterians, Independents; but then all these shall vanish and be no more heard of; the whole family shall be named Christians from Christ. And, indeed, this is no mean blessing; the devil gets great advantage by names, and, therefore, his instruments are busy this way, inventing such as may either tend to contempt and derision, [180] as Chrestians of old, Puritans of late; or to tumult and division, as those names amongst us under which the members of Christ sadly gather into bodies and parties.

I have done with the explication; I come to the points, they are two:--

Doct. 1. That in the latter days there shall be great unity in the

church of God.

Doct. 2. That this unity shall spring from their acknowledging of the right Lord and the right way.

Purity is the ground of this unity. I shall at this time discuss the first point, that in the latter days there shall be great unity and agreement. The main confirmation of the point lieth in promises, for that is the assurance we have of it; however, I shall forbear to heap up scriptures together. You will find many in this discussion reduced to their proper place and heads.

The reasons are these:--

1. Because this will suit best with the quiet and happy estate of those times; God will usher in the glorious and everlasting estate by some preparative degrees; the latter times are more blessed times, former things are to be done away,' Rev. xxi. That is, the former kind of dispensations and providences. Many promises there are which hint the great peace and rest that shall then be in the church. Now that could not be if there were divisions and distinctions; they would produce factions, and factions wars and contentions, and the contentions desolations: Amos vii. 4, The fire devoured the great deep;' that is, contention brought desolation upon places and countries that are most populous. Public differences will end in public disturbances; this is all we can look for in such cases; and therefore, if there were not unity, how could the other promises be fulfilled?--such as these: Isa. xxxiii. 20, Thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that Cannot be taken down; the stakes thereof shall not be removed, nor the cords broken.' It is spoken of the church in the times of the gospel, whose state hitherto hath been most disturbed and perplexed, like the ark upon the waves. It may be there hath been some relaxation and short breathing time, as it is said, Rev. viii. 1, There

was silence in heaven for the space of half an hour;' a little respite given to the church in Constantine's beginning, till Licinius (because not equally prayed for and honoured by the Christians with Constantine) raised a new persecution then; and so at other times there hath been silence for the space of half an hour, but then the miseries returned again with violence enough. Only in the latter days is Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a fixed tent; then there are not such uncertain happiness, and such interchangeable removes. So Ezek. xxviii. 24, And there shall be no more any pricking thorn, nor any provoking briar of all that are round about her.' God hath promised to take away all provocation and molestation, and whatever is grievous; therefore all the cause of its difference and disagreement. Differences in religion stir up the greatest violences and most deadly hatred; that which should restrain and bridle our passions is the fuel of them. As long as there is difference in religion and worship there will be disturbances, and there cannot be that quiet and happy security which the promises do generally annex to those times.

2. Because God will then make some visible provision against the scandal of dissensions: the glory of Christ hath been mightily darkened by them; no such stone of stumbling and rock of offence to the world as the contrariety of opinions and great differences that have been among Christians. Observe and you will find it always to be the great prejudice against Christianity in the primitive times. Sozomen saith, many would turn Christians, but they were always discouraged by that dissonancy of doctrines and opinions that were amongst them. [181] And so Chrysostom speaketh of a certain Ethnick that came unto him and told him, I would become a Christian, but there is such variety of sects among you that I cannot anchor upon anything as certain in your religion. [182] Certainly nothing begets atheism so much as this. Men

have suspected the gospel because there hath been such differences and strife about it, it makes them doubt of all to see distinct factions making the word of God ductile and pliable to so many several purposes. Therefore now a universal unity would much vindicate and recover the glory of Christ out of the hands of such a scandal, and be an excellent provision for the credit of Christianity. To this end Christ prayeth and urgeth this very argument to his Father: John xvii. 23, Let them, all be one;' and again, Let them be made perfect in one, that the world may know that thou hast sent me;' as if he had said, Father! thou knowest how easily the world do take up any prejudice against my doctrine; now, if there should be division among my worshippers, they will think the gospel. a fable, religion but a device. Oh! let them be perfect in one, that the world may know and own me for the true Messiah. Should we go to our own experiences, this we find amongst ourselves, that religion never lost its awe so much as now. God was terrible in his holy places, in the assemblies of his saints, and in the lives of his holy people, the gravity and the strictness of their conversation had a majesty with it, and did dart reverence and awe into the hearts of men; but now all this glory and power is lost, and religion is looked upon but as an empty pretence and covert to some designs. It is said, Acts iv. 32, 33, The multitude of believers were of one heart and one soul,' and then the truths of Christ had power,' and great grace fell upon them.' Christianity hath more lustre when there is such a common consent and sweet brotherly accord. The truths of God have their power, and the servants of God their grace with them. Well, then, the scandal being so great, the prayer of Christ so urgent, God will at one time or another do somewhat eminently and visibly to right the honour of Jesus Christ, and to recover the lustre of Christianity and our glorious profession; for I take this for granted,

that, at some special times, God will roll away the reproach of every imminent scandal that hath been cast upon Christ and religion. And because God loveth, like the good householder, to bring forth the best wine at last, it hath not been done hitherto, but is reserved for the latter days; for, indeed, you shall find that all the latter providences are but so many vindications and clearings of Christ from the former scandals of the world; as for the scandal of meanness hitherto, not many noble, not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty are called.' Christ's company hath been despicable and poor, but now, in the latter days, it is everywhere promised that kings shall bring their glory into the church,' that they shall hold their mouths' at Christ, Isa. lii. 15; that is, with silence and reverence receive his commands; and the like everywhere. So for the scandal of persecution, it is everywhere declared that in the latter days the enemies shall be the subjected party, glad to take hold of the skirt of a Jew,' Zech. viii.;' Bow to the soles of their feet,' Isa. lx.; the magistrates shall call the inhabitants of Jerusalem their strength; and the like elsewhere. So, again, the church hath been under the abasure of reproaches; but God hath promised a vindication in the latter days, that he will establish Zion a praise throughout the earth,' set it as a royal diadem,' Isa. lxii. 3, with the 7th; that he will give them praise in the land of their shame,' Zeph. iii., proportionably to their abasures that they shall have glory. So for paucity and fewness, which is another scandal, there are promises of the gospel's being propagated, of the flowing out of living waters, of the flying in of converts like doves to the windows,' Isa. lx., and the like. So in this present case, because of the variance of the people of Christ under former dispensations, there are promises of special unity and sweet accord in the latter days, of one Lord and one King, of one Shepherd,

one Head,' Hosea i. 11; of one shoulder,' Zeph. iii. 9; and that God will make Jew and Gentile, and all that fear him, to lie down together in peace and safety, and to be all called by one name.

3. The misery of these times doth seem to enforce the greater unity. I take this for the mariner and course of heaven, to work one contrary out of another, by the greatest distractions to make way for unity and order. It is said, Ps. xviii, 11, He hath made darkness his secret place.' God's counsels are always carried under the covert of darkness; usually, when he intendeth the greatest flourishing, he worketh the greatest desolation in the earth; and when unity, he suffereth the greatest distraction (for what grounds I shall tell you by and by); hence is it that we do so often hear of the misery of the latter times, and yet again of the blessedness of the latter times; hard times, and happy times, miserable in the beginning, happy in the end and issue. Hell is let loose in the latter times: they shall give heed to seducing spirits;' and heaven is opened in the latter times: there shall be great light and rare love. When there is such a conflict and contestation between light and darkness, the light will be the clearer afterwards, and the more doubtful the day is, the more glorious will the evening be; for this, I say, is the law and the course of divine dispensations, after the greatest distractions to bring forth the greatest harmony, and the most blessed sweetness and accord; therefore, there being in the latter days such eminent and visible distraction, by the proportions of heaven there will be eminent and visible unity. Of this, more by and by.

To application.

Use 1, of consolation. For consolation to all them that wait or care for the consolation of Israel. Many are ready to faint and stagger at the distractions of the times: Judges v. 15, For the divisions or

breaches of Reuben there were great thoughts of heart,' or, as the original will bear it, great impressions.' These things, indeed, do sadly work with a gracious spirit; the enemies warm themselves by these sparkles, and rejoice over the tire that devoureth the great deep; others, whose hearts are bathed and steeped in pleasures, or cumbered with worldly cares, have not a due sense of the times, and are not enough affected with them; but now, for the people of God, external miseries are not so bad to them, and do not so nearly reach a gospel spirit as differences in religion. Oh! it is very sad to see the roses of the valleys become pricking thorns, and saints in pretence to be devils in practice to one another, the sheep of Christ's own fold to be like the bulls of Bashan, goring and wounding each other; and would our hearts were more affected with it! But here is comfort; God foresaw how troublous and distracted the morning of the latter days would be, and therefore, that we might not be dismayed, hath given us many a comfortable promise to support our hearts under such providences. When God framed the world there was nothing but confusion; you do not know what God can extract out of a chaos. Two things I shall urge upon you to set home this comfort:--

1. Consider your hopes.

2. Know the reason of such providences.

1. Consider your hopes; your times are not to be measured and valued by appearances; it least of all becometh a Christian to observe the clouds: Rom. viii. 24, Hope that is seen is not hope;' that is, those that would hope are not to judge by the present face of things, but by the promises. Teach your faith to see things that cannot be seen, beauty in distractions, unity and order in violence and division: faith is exercised not when you get water out of the fountain, but out of the rock; when you make the eater give you meat, devouring differences

yield comfort and hope. It is better to look to a sure word than to an uncertain providence. See what a promise you have, Isa. xi. 6-8, The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed, their young ones shall lie down together, and the lion shall eat straw with the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den,' &c. I will not undertake to assign a sense to every particular expression; only in the general note, God will effect it, though there be no more hopes than to see lion and lamb, leopard and kid come together, and to persuade natures that are most fierce and contrary unto a peaceable and friendly cohabitation.

2. Know the reason of such providences. Men are perplexed when they do not know the reason of things; fear seizes upon us in the dark: Judges vi. 13, If the Lord be with us, why is all this evil befallen us?' They did not know the reason of the matter, and therefore were troubled at it. If there be such promises of unity, why are there such sad things befallen us? such great breaches and distractions, the ball of contention bandied from one to another, clouds gathering every day thicker and blacker? You will think this is but an ill time to look for unity, such general consent and agreement. Alas! you err, not knowing the reason of your providences; God useth to bring in unity and order by confusions. There are divers reasons for it: I shall name three, which may encourage hope in the saddest times:--

[1.] God doth not love to let the creature look to the end of his designs, and skill the way of his providences; therefore, he will try them by casting a veil upon his work, and hiding his glory in a cloud: Isa. xlv. 15, Verily, thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of

Israel the Saviour.' He meant to be a Saviour, but they should know no such thing, a Saviour under a veil, a hidden Saviour. Providences are so disposed as if he meant to do quite otherwise; so Isa. xlviii. 7, They are created now, not from the beginning, lest thou shouldst say, I knew them.' God speaketh concerning the matter of Babylon and the ruin of that empire, which should be effected so strangely that none should see which way providence tended, or say, Now I know what God will do. God loveth to hide the particular way and path of his providence, so that your times shall seem not to have the least connection or respect to your hopes; it is so in all his dealings; see John xi. 6. Jesus loved Lazarus, and when he heard he was sick, he abode two days; little love in that, to stand still when there was need of help; yet that stay was for the advantage of the miracle and commendation of his love. So John ii.; when Christ meant to give them wine he calleth for water-pots; for God will not have you look to the way and end of his counsels; Deus sum non sequax, as Luther seemed to hear God speak to him when he complained of some cross providences. The creatures are not to teach God how to effectuate his promises; there is encouragement enough to wait, even when the face of things doth most lour upon your expectations.

[2.] Because God will show you a point of divine skill, to make poison become your preservative, and your ruin your establishment; he will unite you by your divisions, gather you by your own scatterings. Judas's treason was called felix scelus, a happy wickedness, because it occasioned Christ's death. Many times God maketh contentions happy in their issue and result, and though for the present their influence is very deadly to religion, yet their effect is confirmation to the truth, and, in the end, God's people are brought more firmly and sweetly to close with one another and their God. The noise of axe and hammers doth

but square stones for the temple, that they may lie the more evenly in the buildings. Usually we find that religious controversies (like the knocking of flints) yield more light, and, by the providence of God, occasion more sincere love. Before we had but a negative affection to truth, and might rather be said not to hate than to love it. Every vulgar and low spirit will love truth when it is honoured and advantaged with common consent: true affections are ravished with the beauty of truth, and have some positive ground for which they can love truths; yea, and the more when they are suspected and questioned, for then they shine with the greater lustre, as being able to endure contradiction, and as being more strongly vindicated and asserted. Thus, you know, trees shaken are the more firmly rooted, and dislocated joints, if well set again, prove the stronger, as in the point of assurance. After doubtings, the soul doth most sweetly and closely repose itself in the bosom of Christ, so outwardly the more smoke there is in the temple, the greater glory afterward. In times of common consent men keep together as those that are bound with a chain; but in times of difference and dissenting, God's people are at one with God and one another upon higher motives, and love truth for its own sake, it being, as I said, more cleared and vindicated. I have often wondered at that inference of the people of God, Micah iv. 5, All people will every one of them walk in the name of his God, and we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever.' That which is a scandal to the world, is to them a motive and engagement to firmness in the truth and union with one another. There are different ways and persuasions in the world, therefore let us the more cleave together in the right way; the variety that was abroad made them more at one. So at that of David, Ps. cxix. 126, 127, They have made void thy law, therefore do I love thy commandments above gold.' When the ways of God are questioned, nay,

disannulled, exploded with contempt and scorn, the more precious to a gracious heart: therefore do I love them, saith David; that was the very motive of his affection, ver. 127.

[3.] Because God loveth to bestow blessings when the creatures most want them, to give them the greatest unity after the greatest distractions, that their blessings may be according to the rate and degree of their miseries and abasement. God, I say, loveth to make consolations abound,' 2 Cor. i. 5, in the very degree of sufferings, and therefore you may bear up in the greatest breaches. When God meant them Canaan, he would first give them enough of the wilderness, enough to carry some proportion with the future happiness: Deut. ii. 3, Ye have compassed this mountain long enough, turn you northward.' They had been thirty-nine years compassing Mount Seir; it might have been done in so many weeks or days, but the pillar of the cloud never went before them till now. God may make you fetch compass enough about this mountain, keep you in the wilderness of distractions, ere you can see providence before you leading of you into better times. You shall see the people of God in the wilderness did plead the equity of this rule and course of heaven: Ps. xc. 15, Make us glad according to the days wherein thou hast afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil.' It was the prayer of Moses in the desert, let Canaan countervail the wilderness. The longer in the distractions, the more abundance of honey and milk shall we find in that good land, more Sowings of grace, larger discoveries of the mind of God.

Well, then, be sensible of the evil of the times, but with comfort in the Lord, and hope in the promises.

Object. But you will say, These are generals that concern the whole church: especially at such a season, what do you say to our distempers and distractions?

Sol. Though the part followeth the reason of the whole, and God's dispensations are alike to both the catholic and particular churches, so that what is said of the whole may be applied to a part, as many times, on the contrary, promises made to particular persons are reputed as catholic and of a more universal use, and so applied to the whole, yet I shall speak a little more expressly to our own case.

Much may be spoken in this matter about the cause and cure of our distempers, the danger of the times and the hopes. But because this would engage to too large a digression, and the discourse will rather be managed and carried on by rational conjectures than sure and theological grounds, therefore I shall wait for a more convenient season, and but a little touch upon matters that otherwise would challenge an accurate discussion.

None can be ignorant of the state of the times,--that a spirit of division and delusion is let loose and gone abroad amongst us, so that the pillars of religion are shaken, the most concerning truths questioned, nay, exploded with scorn and contempt; great agitations there are everywhere, and God only knoweth whereunto they will grow. It is a thing of great advantage and benefit to us to consider the ground and rise of our distempers, and what is the special genius of that spirit of error that worketh amongst us, and so possibly we may come to conceive some hope of the allaying and removal of it. Divers concurring causes there are that help to beget, conceive, bring forth, and midwife such foul productions into the world, and therefore, before I touch upon the hopes, I shall a little reflect upon the rise and growth of our dissentiency and division, and how it came to be thus with us as now it is. We may let pass the general causes, viz., God's providence, who usually maketh the morning of a glorious day misty and dark; Satan's malice, who, when his own holds are shaken, loveth to ruin all

the world together with himself; the corruptions of embased nature, by which the heart is either weak, and so apt to prostitute itself to the grossest fancies if left by God, or wicked, and so naturally opposite to the truths of God, very willing to blot out those impressions and that sense that we have of them. I say, if we let pass these general causes, we shall find upon an inquiry that thus our evils grew upon us: First, they were hatched by the ignorance, iniquity, and violence of the former times (when things are very bad, men are apt to fly out into the contrary extremities), and began to break out upon this great change, which the former corruptions did even necessitate and enforce; as usually, you know, great and violent changes occasion great tumults, ill humours in the body discover themselves upon a strain. When God changed his own ordinances, erroneous spirits were busy; I mean, in the first times of the gospel. When a people begin to innovate, it is a hard matter to keep them within the bounds of any moderation; and, therefore, it is the policy of the church of Rome to change nothing, ne videatur errasse; reformations are very perilous, especially to corrupt bodies. Here, then, was the occasion, and indeed a sad occasion to many, who, in the extremity of opposition to antichristian ways, obtruded themselves upon as sad or worse in conveniences, going off not only from vain rites, but religion itself; and instead of leaving corruptions, left worship; and, indeed, any other thing could not be expected, if we consider how loose and slack the reins of government have been of late, with what violence and tumult this change was managed, not in the solemn, grave way of conviction and humiliation. Buildings stand whose foundations are laid in those deeps; but otherwise it will be hard to settle things; partly because till the error be rightly stated the truth is not found out; partly be cause such changes make men lose all awe and reverence in the matter of

religion, and so every man digresseth into his own way, and adoreth the idol of his own brain. Usually you will find whatever is carried on by scoffs and popular tumults seldom succeedeth well. I confess God loveth to pour contempt upon the sons of Levi that are partial in the covenant,' Mal. ii. 9; and, it is his way many times to cause the voice of many waters (id est, of the confused multitude) to go before the voice of mighty thunderings, Rev. xix. 6 (id est, the regular act of the magistrate, whose sentences and decrees are terrible as thunder); and therefore I do adore the justice of divine providence in causing the former ministry to become base and contemptible before all the people. But, however, I cannot but sadly bewail the mischiefs that abound amongst us by the neglect of men. Though the corruptions of Episcopacy made it justly odious, yet it would have been better it had been disputed down rather than jested down; arguments would have done more good than scoffs, besides the danger of returning to folly. Do but consider the present inconveniences of making so great a change without more public and rational conviction, when things that before were of reverend esteem are of a sudden decried. What is the effect? Why! religion itself is of less esteem; men suspect all can as well scoff out truth as error. Calvin's observation is excellent: he saith that in times of changes there are lucianici homines qui jocose etper ludibrium garriunt adversus superstitiones papatus, interim nullo tanguntur timore Dei, &c.--many that are of Lucian's temper, who, by jesting against received rites, insensibly lose all sense and awe of religion, and by scoffing at false gods, come the less to dread the true. Consider and see if the former liberty of tongues and pens hath not begotten that present irreverence and fearlessness that is in the spirits of men against things that undoubtedly are of God. But this is not all; do but consider how many are hardened in their old ways, and

prejudiced against the reformers, as if they were men that did procedere non ad perfectionem sed ad permutationem, were men given to changes, Prov. xxiv. 21, merely to leave things out of passion and present dislike, or, which is worse, out of self-aims, and are ready to say of them, as Austin said of some one who appeared against the pagans, non pietate everterunt idola, sed avaritia--only to divide the spoil; and all this because the grounds, reasons, and necessity of the change have not been publicly enough discovered. And truly it were very well if the loose principles and in direct practices of some did not give occasion to these slanders. All that I shall further say is this, that to leap out of one way into another, either out of base aims or without due shame and sense of former miscarriages, will but make our own station the more questionable, for, certainly, self-respects have no majesty with them; and though we be in the right, yet having a wrong heart, God recompenseth into our own bosoms the very measure of our dealing with others. We now have found the great occasion of the spreading of those evils amongst us which were hatched under the iniquity of the former times, and possibly let alone as the last reserve against endeavours of reformation, and now meeting with a people capable of such impressions, who love to wander, Jer. xiv. 10, they are the more easily diffused and propagated. Some are ensnared by their own pride and foolish singularity; others by discontent, base aims, unworthy reflections upon their honour, profits, &c.; most by a spirit of opposition against the ministry: God hath set us out to be men of contention to the whole earth, Jer. xv. 10. Those that are censores morum, whose office is to tax public abuses, will be looked upon as men of strife. We might justly suspect ourselves if this were not the portion of our cup. This spirit certainly acteth many: enemies will snarl when the great voice biddeth the witnesses come up hither,

Rev. xi. 12. Surely some do behold their late ascension and glory with envy and indignation, others possibly may be led by a desire of being somebody in the world. Simon Magus would be ti`s me'gas, Acts viii. 9; there is a natural itch and desire after mastership in Israel. James checketh it, James iii. 1, My brethren, be not many masters:' we naturally affect the honour of this chair: some bottles will burst if they have not vent, Job xxxii. 19. Tertullian observeth that this was the reason why divers went over to the Gnostics and the opposite parties in his time: [183] young men, and men otherwise unfit, presently commenced into some esteem and mastership. Thus you see different menaced by different spirits, and all one way or another increasing the distractions of the times, which, being thus occasioned and diffused, are supported and kept up by factions and parties, men severally prosecuting their cross designs without any regard to the truth and advantage of religion; and if any party be opposed and discountenanced, their delusion is the more strong by a supposal of persecution; for, by comparing their state with the state of the people of God, who suffered under the fury of former times, their prejudices are increased, and they think it can be no less than religion, and truth of zeal for the glory of God, to expose themselves to so many hazards; and they do the more confidently believe it, because God's witnesses have mostly prophesied in sackcloth; and hitherto Christ hath appeared for the most part against the worship and customs of nations. John saith Christ came into the world, 1 John iii. 8, i`na analu'se, to unravel Satan's webs: he hath been indeed acting the demolishing rather than the adstructive part; but therefore they go away with erroneous mistakes, as if he would never build, establish, and set up, and as if the kings of the earth should never bring in their glory to the church, and martyrs were made so more by the blood and suffering than by the

cause. [184]

Thus I have touched upon the causes and state of the present distempers. Much more might be said upon this subject, but now I was only willing to point at the heads of things. But you will say, Then what hopes? I answer--Our wound is grievous, but not incurable; many things there are to encourage us to keep silence, and wait upon God till he ordain better things for us. Let me speak a word or two on this matter. Consider, then, errors usually are not long-lived; the next age declareth the folly of them: 1 Cor. iii. 13, The day shall declare it.' Time will show what is stubble and hay, though men have high thoughts of it for the present. We raise so much dust by the heat of our contentions that our eyes are blinded, the glory of truth darkened; but things will clear up again: we wonder at the contests of former ages, and so will they at ours. When God cometh into his holy temple, all the earth will keep silence,' Hab. ii. 20. The nearer we approach to Antichrist's ruin, God will give out more light, Rev. xviii. Babylon fell when the earth was enlightened with the angel's glory. Light will increase towards the perfect day; and as light increaseth, so doth love; that great unity, spoken of before, is when there shall be more knowledge, for that is the reason rendered, Isa. xi. 9, For the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the world as the waters cover the sea.' And then, again, the devil usually overacts himself by appearing in some odious delusion, no longer as an angel of light, but as a foul fiend, in such direct opposition to Christ that all good men loathe him. Usually when God maketh any great change, things come to an extremity and excess of corruption. The Arians prevailed for a long time, but being so detestably vicious and insolently cruel, they ruined their own cause. Or else Satan runneth himself out of breath in some civil commotions.

The Remonstrants in the Low Countries quite overturned their cause when they began to raise tumults and troubles everywhere; so those under the conduct of Munster, in Germany, did. but run themselves violently, like the Gadarenes' swine, Mat. viii. 32, upon their own ruin and destruction. Usually when Satan hath such great wrath, his time is but short, Rev. xii. 12. God delighteth mightily to ruin him by the violence of his own endeavours.

Use 2, for exhortation. It serveth to exhort and press you to has ten and set on these hopes. Promises do not exclude action, but engage to it. Hope keepeth up endeavours; what you do in this kind will not be in vain in the Lord. The promises hold forth unity; strive after it.

1. By prayers.

2. By endeavours.

1. By prayers. When things are otherwise irremediable, here is the last refuge: Ps. cxxii. 6, Pray for the peace of Jerusalem; they shall prosper that love it.' If you love it, that is the least you can do, to mourn over the matter to God; indeed sometimes it is all that we can do. Learned Perkins [185] said of his times, Non sunt ista litigandi tempora, sed orandi--prayers are fitter for these times than disputes. Carnal zeal may put us upon disputes; it is true zeal that puts us upon prayer, when we are so tenderly affected for God's glory as that, in that respect, we can go and mourn over the matter to him. When Luther thought to redress the evils of his times, one told him, Abi in cellam et die, Miserere nostri--go and cry, Lord, have mercy upon us. Truly things seem past help and cure: I but go and urge the matter to God; that which is marvellous in our eyes, Zech. viii. 6, is not so in his; a man goeth most cheerfully to the throne of grace when he hath the encouragement of a particular promise. Here is a promise not only to the case but to the times, In that day there shall be one Lord, and one

name;' and that you may not think it a casual promise and comfortable word that dropped out of the mouth of God unawares, you shall see it is a blessing full in the eye of the general covenant; for it is very observable that when the tenor of the covenant is expressed, unity is made one of the chief blessings of it: Jer. xxxii. 39, I will give them one heart and one way for the good of them, and of their children after them.' Mark, he saith in the former verse that he will be their God, and they shall be his people, which is the form of the covenant; and then he undertaketh to give them one heart and one way, union in opinion and union in affections: so Ezek. xix. 11, I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within them.' It is a main branch of the covenant to give them one heart, a heart united to God, and so to one another. Urge God then with his own promise and covenant; be instant and earnest with him: 2 Thes. iii. 16, The Lord of peace give you peace always, by all means;' the Lord of peace, God that loveth it, God that worketh it; and the latter phrases, always and by all means, note the vehemency and intentness of his desires. One way or another, let God find out a means to ordain peace for you. For your encouragement consider, you do not only pray, but Christ prayeth with you; Christ intercedeth with the Father for the same thing: John xvii. 21, That they may be all one, and that they may be perfect in one, that the world may know that thou hast sent me.' That prayer is but the copy of his continual intercession. He knoweth what a scandal it is to his name, &c., and therefore he saith, Let them be one. Now, this is a great comfort when Christ prayeth for the same thing for which you pray; he is worthy to be heard though you be not; God will not refuse him that speaketh in heaven, however he dealeth with poor crawling worms on earth.

2. By endeavours. Follow hard after it. I shall speak here to the

people in general, then to the ministry, and then shall be bold to lay two or three considerations at the feet of this honourable assembly to help on this work.

First, To the people. Oh! that all of us would now mind the things of peace and holiness in these distracted times: The great house is smitten with clefts, and the little house with breaches,' Amos vi. 11. There are divisions in cities, divisions in families, divisions in councils, divisions in the kingdom, and yet few healers of the breaches. We are already at a great distance, and yet we do in alia omnia ire, seek to go farther off from one another. Some make it a piece of their religion and zeal to dissent and be otherwise minded. Christ saith love shall wax cold in the latter days, Mat. xxiv. 12; the context showeth it is meant of this dispensative love. Ludolfus said, the world was at first destroyed with water for the heat of lusts; but it will be destroyed with fire for the coldness of love. [186] Oh! that we could stir you up to endeavour peace and reconciliation. The first work is the people's; things are most managed according to your love and hatred. Herod could do nothing to John for fear of the people, and it is said of others they could not do what they would because of the people. Oh! therefore, come, as the people did to John, and say, What shall we do?

Truly much is to be done by you. I shall touch upon a few things. Besides reconciling yourselves to God, which is the best way to make others be at peace with you, and is to be heeded in a chief place; for when you are at one with God, he will give you the one heart, and one way with other of his people: all agreement ariseth from that oneness with God and Christ; but, I say, besides this general rule, let me entreat you to mind these things.

[1.] Let every one of us mortify such ill affections as may any way

engage us to a disturbance and vexatious bitterness. Ill affections do as often divide us as ill opinions; wars come from our lusts, James iv. 1; distempered spirits occasion distracted times. It is observed that when there was strife among the Philippians, the apostle doth not state the controversies, but giveth rules against pride and vainglory and self-seeking, Phil. ii. 3, 4. There are many evils in the heart of man. I shall instance in these: There is an itch of novelty; naturally we adore things that are new; they flocked about Paul because they supposed him a setter forth of new gods, Acts xvii. Seneca observeth right, Homini ingenitum est magis nova quam magna mirari--men admire a glaring meteor and comet more than they do the glorious sun. So pride; that will make a man singular. There is a holy singularity: Prov. xxx. 31, the going of the he-goat is comely; that is, as he walketh before the flock. Thus to be a leading man in religion is honourable, but pride puts a man upon an evil singularity, Col. ii. 18, intruding himself into things not seen, being puffed up with his own fleshly mind.' It puts men upon ungrounded conceits, quintessential extracts, foolish niceties. So envy; that begets an evil eye upon each others' renown and esteem: therefore, when God would reconcile Ephraim and Judah, he would take away their envy: And Ephraim shall not envy Judah, nor Judah vex Ephraim,' Isa. xi. 13. So revenge and discontent. Porphyry and Julian, two bitter enemies, receiving injuries from the church, became atheists. The devil worketh upon stomach and discontent, thoughts of disrespect. So there is self-seeking: men care not what they do so they may accommodate their own ends; they speak perverse things to draw disciples after them,' Acts xx. 30. Some men love to be in the head of a train, and therefore, if God's truths will not serve their ends, they can easily baulk them. So self-conceit; men make idols of their own conceptions, love an opinion non quia veram sed quia suam,

not because it is true, but theirs; they are angry because others dissent from them, not from Christ; as appeareth plainly, because those that know little or nothing of the mind of Christ make most bitter and loud outcries against errors. Men are passionate in their own cause, and would have every one embrace their fancies: pray, what is the spring of all your disputes? Self, or Christ's glory? I cannot go over all the corruptions; only you see from small sparkles a great fire is kindled; that which goeth up in thin exhalations descendeth in great showers; that which is at first but a lust, a vain desire, a corrupt working in your own hearts, is at length a tumult and combustion in a church or state. Therefore, in the general, note that a mortified spirit is the most peaceable.

[2.] Keep yourselves pure from ill opinions. You must as carefully avoid an error in judgment as a vice in conversation; many dally with errors, not considering the danger of them. Oh! consider, God hateth filthiness of the spirit as well as filthiness of the flesh, and a vain mind is as great a judgment as vile affections, Rom. i. 26, 28: Yea, certainly, to the public, errors are more dangerous than vices, for vices and gross sins are more against natural awe and shame, and so less spreading, and though we yield to sin in ourselves, yet we do not love it in others; and so among persons openly vicious there is nothing to allure and draw into a faction or party. Therefore be cautious and wary, if not for your own soul, yet for the common peace; as Tertullian said to Scapula, Si non vis tibi parcere, parce Carthagini. So, if you will not pity yourselves, pity England; a man would be careful of being accessary to a kingdom's or a church's ruin; where the influence of an action is so public, you had need proceed with good deliberation and advice. However, that I may not in this point seem to press too hard upon any one party, let me discover the extremities on both hands.

There are two evils abroad--easy credulity and stubborn prejudice, [187] and both of them increase the differences, whilst some men's judgments are forestalled by a tradition, others seduced by an invention; therefore it is good to take the mean between both, which is the course the apostle prescribeth, 1 Thes. v. 21, Prove all things, hold fast that which is good;' prove all things, that we reject not truth by over-much prejudice; hold fast that which is good, that we close not with error by over-much credulity. You owe so much to everything that pretendeth to God as to consider it. When Ehud told Eglon, I have a message from God, he arose out of his seat,' Judges iii. 20. I say, you owe so much reverence to everything that challengeth descent from heaven as to weigh the claim. I do the rather urge this, because the adversaries of Christianity have been always those that have least inquired into it. Tertullian observeth it of the enemies of the truth in his days, nolentes audire quod auditum damnare non possent--they would not hear that which they had a mind to hate. [188] God, that gave man reason, never intended that he should take up love or hatred by chance; therefore it is good to try things. Sometimes a man may meet with an angel unawares, Heb. xiii. 2; only, on the other hand, remember I persuade you to a serious search, not to an easy credulity, not to play with opinions as if there were no hurt in them, but to examine them in the fear of God, to call in the help of the Spirit, and to use all the outward helps God hath left to the church. The priest's lips are to preserve knowledge; and the apostle saith, Eph. iv. 12, 14, that God hath given pastors and teachers, that we be no more tossed about with every wind of doctrine.' That is a help which God hath provided against this evil, and it is presumptuous arrogance to despise it.

[3.] Do not impropriate Christ to any one party or sort of professors.

The apostle reproveth those that said, I am of Christ,' as well as those that said, I am of Paul,' 1 Cor. i. 13. Those that spake as if Christ were only theirs, they were accounted a faction too. Jude wrote in times of division and delusion, and he calleth the salvation a common salvation,' Jude's Epistle, ver. 3; mine, and yours, and theirs too. Men should not speak as if they only were holy, they only were saints, and all others but the world at the best, but civil and convinced men. Nothing enrageth more than to confine Christ to an opinion, as if all religion did begin and end with it Naturally we are apt to do so; we envy the commonness of Christian privileges; but it should not be so among the Lord's people. There were differences at Corinth, but how doth Paul write to them? 1 Cor. i. 2, To the saints at Corinth, and to all that call on the name of Jesus Christ, theirs and ours.' Mark that clause, theirs and ours;' he checketh this natural envy in us which would impale and inclose the free Christ, the common salvation. It was an expression Tertullian used of some in his time, illic ipsum esse est promereri--it was religion enough to be one of them. [189] Oh! certainly this is not Christian. We must own that of God that we see in them, though they do not every way come up to our mind. We prize a jewel in a toad's head; how much more should we love grace in brethren whose blemish is only some petty dissent. Christ loved the young man, Mark x. 21, for the moral good that was in him; and I remember, in another place, he checketh his disciples for prohibiting one to do miracles in his name, because he did not follow them. It is in Mark ix. 38-40, where he speaketh expressly to this very case; it is most Christian to own the work of the Spirit everywhere, wheresoever we find it.

[4.] Never serve a faction or party to the prejudice and detriment of truth and religion. Men cry up badges of distinction, and so divide

Christ into different bodies and parties: 1 Cor. iii. 4, I am of Paul, and I am of Apollos, and I am of Cephas;' and so every one serveth the party upon which his interest hangeth, and hence come state broils and divisions, and discontent and quarrelling with one another, even to the apparent prejudice of religion; all acts of communion and brotherhood are forborne, and men merely condemn and oppose things because asserted or agitated by the opposite faction, blindly admire all that their own party doth, yea, and will rather give up religion and all for a prey to the enemy than lay aside their mutual animosities. Thus Eusebius witnesseth that there was great siding one against another, pastor against pastor, and people against people, some engaged in this faction, some in that, till the brethren of the camp brought in Diocletian's persecution, which devoured them all. Nay, when it cometh to this, they are so sworn to their own faction and party, that they will defend the apparent and open enemies of Jesus Christ, and so as they may strengthen themselves in the lesser differences, they will hazard the main principles; as Meletius, who formerly suffered for religion, being discontented with Petrus Alexandrinus (though his difference with the church was but small), joined with the Arians, and his Meletians with him. Oh! it is sad when men, to support their own interest and faction, will call in the open enemies of Christ to their aid, and cover them under their buckler. We have an eminent instance in scripture of this matter in Acts xxiii. 6, &c.; they looked upon Paul as a damnable blasphemer, but when once he pretended to the Pharisees, as, indeed, in the point of the resurrection he held with them, then We find no fault in this man; but if a spirit or angel have spoken to him,' &c. Many things might be spoken under this head, for, indeed, it proveth fatal to religion when once we cry up names, and those names beget parties, for then men look only to the accommodating of their own

faction, though it be to the hazard of religion and public welfare.

[5.] As far as truth and conscience will give leave, there should be a profession of brotherhood, a condescension and yielding to one another in love, a walking together, or, at least, a Christian forbearance: Eph. iv. 2, With long-suffering forbearing one another in love;' the strong are to forbear the weak, and the weak the strong, to suffer them a little to walk up to their measures of knowledge; so Phil. iii. 15, 16, Let us, as many as be perfect, be thus minded, and if in anything ye be otherwise minded, God will reveal even the same to you; nevertheless, whereunto we have obtained, let us walk together by the same rule, mind the same thing.' Every one hath not the same measure of grace nor degree of light; as long as they hold of the head we cannot forsake their communion. The apostle speaketh those words last quoted in reference to the controversies of those times; every one could not see so far into them as others could, as how far the law was to be left and the Mosaical rites discontinued; therefore, the apostle's rule is, that they should walk together, go sweetly together as far as they could, and those that were grown and had most light (whom he calleth perfect) he wisheth to be thus minded, to act according to their light, but not to discourage others in their weak beginnings; and for the other sort he wisheth them to wait upon God without murmuring and contention, and they would find their hearts directed into the same truths and ways. This is the rule, you see, in such cases; but now the misery amongst us is, we keep a proud and contemptuous distance, and do not yield, not only as far as religion, but as far as our own private principles would give leave. We do not walk together in the Lord, and therefore doth Christianity suffer such loss everywhere, for we cannot be helpful to one another's faith.

[6.] Abstain from reproaches and undue provocations, and dispense all

civil respects with meekness. I put two rules together: our differences do not only unchristian us, but unman us many times: Gal. v. 15, If ye bite and devour one another, take heed ye do not consume one another.' The apostle useth such words as are proper to beasts, for indeed such violence is brutish: God hath armed the beasts with teeth and claws, but man with reason and judgment; to smite with the hand is beneath a man, and to smite with the tongue beneath a Christian; and yet how often is it found that Christians are guilty of both! The controversies between them degenerate into carnal strifes and debates, and are no more religious but personal, because of those mutual revilings, base and low reflections upon the name and credit of each other; every one will excuse himself for not being first in the transgression. But revenge doth not differ from injury, but only in the order; one is first, the other second. [190] It was no excuse to Adam that Eve was first in the transgression: Christ being reviled, reviled not again,' 1 Peter ii. 23. It is no shame to be overcome in such an act; patient sufferings carry more majesty with them than carnal replies and defences; and therefore, though provoked, forbear reproaches. The other part of the rule is, that all civil respects must be dispensed with all meekness and sweetness. Strangeness, and distance, and incivilities do enrage; we are bid to have peace with all men, if possible.' Rom. xii. 18. To pursue all honest ways and means, if possible, noteth it must not be by any indirect course, otherwise we may try the utmost; for damnable heretics, and such as raze the foundation, there are other rules; we cannot, with safety, bid them God speed: 2 John 10, If he do not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house, nor bid him God speed,' John, the disciple of love, persuadeth to such strangeness in such a case; so the prophet telleth Jehoram, that were it not for Jehoshaphat, he would not look towards him, nor see him,' 2

Kings iii. 14. So when Cerinthus came into the bath at Ephesus, John went away: Let us go hence. Hic est Cerinthus, hostis veritatis--here is Cerinthus, the enemy of the truth,' he having denied the Godhead of Christ. So Marcion, who denied Christ, the resurrection, in effect the whole New Testament, when he came glavering to Polycarpus with a Non agnoscis nos?--Dost thou not know me? It was answered by him--Agnosco te primogenitum diaboli--I know thee to be the devil's first-born. In these extreme cases, the servants of God have been thus austere; but in errors besides the foundation, and of a lesser consequence, the other rule taketh place, and you will find that meekness and sweetness of converse gaineth much.

More might be said, but I forbear. Oh! that that which is spoken were a little considered. None have more engagements to love than Christians; none have been more exemplary in love than Christians. Once it was said, Aspice ut se mutuo diligunt Christiani--see how the Christians love one another [191] ; but, alas! a little after it was said by a heathen: There are no beasts so mischievous to men as Christians are to one another. [192] Oh! it is too often too true.

Secondly, Because of the publicness of the auditory I shall be bold to speak a word or two to my brethren in the ministry, and those who are to deal publicly in these matters; they may do much to the calming of the times. We are ambassadors of the Prince of peace; it will ill become us to be men of violence. Oh! that the Lord would dispose of our hearts to think of healing the breaches; the reproaches cast upon us are a hint from God to press us to the more care. I hope I shall not take too much upon me if I commend something out of the scriptures to myself and brethren. Admonitions are not accusations, and when God giveth a call, it is not too much peremptoriness to admonish: by the bowels of Christ let me entreat you to mind a few things.

1. Beware of passion in your own interests; though they may be much shaken and endamaged in the present controversies, yet self-denying patience will be the best way to settle them: the injury to us may be great, but the injury to truth is greater; we must approve our faithfulness in afflictions as well as doctrine. It is an excellent place that of the apostle Paul, 2 Cor. vi. 3, Giving no offence, but approving ourselves as the ministers of Christ in necessities and distresses,' Mark, that we are to show ourselves ministers of Christ in furthering the gospel by our necessities; and sometimes it is a duty to depart from our just rights. Therefore be not too passionate in and for your own interests. The hint is not needless: Christ's disciples, being too sensible of their own contempt, called for fire from heaven, Luke ix. 54, 55. A tenderness of our own interests may soon raise us into an undue heat and rage, and in a mistake of our spirits, we may think that a coal from the altar which indeed is but taken from some common hearth. The false church hath been more zealous for interests than truths. Luther might have been more quiet, if he had not declaimed against the triple crown and the monks' bellies. Our conveniences should learn to give place to the advantage of truth. It is said of our Lord and Master Jesus Christ, Mat. xii. 19, that he shall not strive, nor cry, neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets,' i.e., he shall not keep a-bustling and astir for worldly glory and great matters in this life; and truly we should learn of him. Paul would not take maintenance, because the false teachers pretended they would preach the gospel freely: 2 Cor. xi. 12, But what I do, that I will do, that I may cut off occasion from them which desire occasion, that wherein they glory they may be found even as we.' It seemeth that some, as now, to get credit and entrance, would take no relief from the churches; now, saith Paul, though I have a right, I will not make use of it, that I

may not, through their glorying in this matter, disadvantage my endeavours in the gospel. Our esteem, credit, authority, must all be sacrificed upon the interest and advantage of truth. Nazianzen, in his orations and verses, doth often profess his desires of laying down his bishopric and all his church honours for the peace of the church. In one place, I remember, above all, he tells them of Constantinople, that rather than he would any way be guilty of the least concurrence to their distractions, he should count it a high mercy to go aside and spend the rest of his days in obscure silence, for he had learned to prefer Christ above all:--

Ou ga`r ies' geno'men moi'res thra'sus aspidio'tes,
oud' e'thelon Christou allo' ti` pro'sthe phe'rein,
Alla` ta7` me`n le'thes keu'thoi butho's, autar e'goge
Enthen aphormethei`s, te'rpsomai atremi'e.' [193]

A good resolution and worthy to be imitated.

2. Press doctrines of Christ, and the main things of religion. Some men love to live in the fire, and to handle the red-hot questions of the age with passion and acrimony; but, alas! this doth no good. Zuinglius was once asked by a friend, Cur non contra pontificios?--why he was not more keen against the Papists, and preached not oftener against them? He answered, he would first plant the fear of God, and then men would be for the cause of God. To gain men to a party before they be gained to God is not so warrantable, and to press zeal in some particular ways doth but produce blind fury, which undoeth all. Tertullian [194] noteth it as a miscarriage of the heretics in his time, that they were more for gaining men to a party than Christianity. Suppose you press the truth, yet Christ telleth us that wisdom is justified of her children,' Mat. xi. 19. God's own people are most zealous for God's truths: Jude 4, They turn the grace of our God into wantonness.' Sense of interest

begetteth the purest, freest zeal for God. The intent of our ministry is riot that we should gain men to the support of our faction and party, but to Christ and Christianity. Other differences would be allayed were it not that we do so often revive them by unseasonable agitations; and, indeed, for the lesser differences, they were better wholly laid aside than so often stirred. Calvin, after his return to Geneva, would never contend about the business of wafer-cakes, for which he was at first cast out; though he altered not his mind in it, yet would never publicly contend in that matter, only many times modestly suggested what he thought was the better way. [195]

3. When you deal with the errors of the time (for certainly that is necessary; we must stablish our hearers in the present truth,' 2 Peter i. 12), do it with a great deal of caution and wariness. Though I would not prescribe, yet give me leave humbly to offer three things, which possibly may prevent some abuses:--

[1.] Beware of loose flings and general declamations against errors heresies; these do but exulcerate minds, prejudice our testimony, and much hinder it from being received. This is a miscarriage on both sides: men urge their ways in loose flings, conceited nicks, and implications, general outcries of one side against superstitious antichristianism and the men of the world (words soon spoken); on the other side, against errors, new lights, and new opinions. The word worketh most when it is most particular and demonstrative: thunder at a distance doth not so much startle me as a clap in my own zenith. It is good to go by way of particular proof and argument against opinions; prove them to be errors, and then call them so; otherwise loose and general invectives will make but superficial impressions. It is very observable that when James had proved that conceit of God's being the author of sin to be an error, then he said, James i. 16, Err not, my

beloved brethren;' he first disputeth and then dissuadeth. It is very observable too, Mat. xxiii. from the 13th to the 33d ver., that our Saviour never denounceth a woe against the Pharisees, but he presently rendereth a reason for it: Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for ye devour widows' houses,' &c.; Woe, for ye shut the kingdom of God,' &c. Usually ungrounded zeal stayeth in generals, and ordinarily it is out of deceit or weakness.

[2.] Deal herein with all soberness and meekness. We should do what we can to remove prejudices; men drink in truths when they are sweetly propounded; God was in the still voice; the small rain falleth sweetly upon the tender grass; men presently engage themselves to a fervour and heat, and that marreth all; it is but as oil to the flames. I remember a speech of Darius, when one of the soldiers of the camp railed against Alexander, he telleth him, I kept you to fight against Alexander, not to rail against him: those arrows of bitter words are not the weapons of our warfare. Passion showeth we are angry more against the person than the error; too often it maketh us forsake the main controversy and go on upon a wrong scent. One saith, He that speaketh to kings must speak pe'masi bussi'nois, with silken words: he that speaketh to dissenters had need make his speech as smooth and soft as may be. I am sure it is agreeable to the apostle's advice, In meekness instruct those that oppose themselves,' 2 Tim. ii. 25. And in the same place he showeth that the servants of God must be gentle and patient.

[3.] Take heed of aggravating and greatening matters, making them of more importance than indeed they are; former ages were possessed with this spirit, every lesser dissent and mistake was made a heresy or error in the faith, as appeareth by their catalogues.

Tertullian had but spoken two or three words in favour of Montanus, and the priests of Home presently cried him up for a Montanist, and

accordingly dealt with him, quo protinus offensus (saith he that wrote his life) [196] prorsus in Montani paries transivit. I confess it is good to be watchful to dash Babylon's brats, and take the little foxes, Cant, ii. 15, i.e., to oppose the first and modest appearances of error: the party last amongst us began with words, and would have brought in things. Therefore, I say, it is good to be watchful; however this will not justify rough dealing with those that vary from us but in an expression, and straining everything to the worst sense and most odious consequences, that it may appear to be heretical. Christ's own words were mistaken and wrested into a sense which he would not own; he said he would destroy the temple in three days, John ii. 19. He meant it of his body, they accused him of the same words; and yet they are called false witnesses, Mat. xxvi. 61, who accused him of it, because they wrested it to another sense, applying it to the material temple. Many have a faculty of turning Eloi into Elias, molehills into mountains, making men offenders for a word, and by false glosses causing innocent things to seem odious.

[4.] Let me entreat you to improve your interests for brotherly and friendly collations; public conferences cannot be had without tumult, and there is a prejudice against public sermons; and, again, private disputes are more for victory than truth; usually there is more of strife than love in them. Tertullian [197] saith of his private disputation with a Jew, Both drew out their reasonings, and, through the heat of contention, both went away unsatisfied. But now, if there were meetings instituted for the propounding of things rather by way of case than controversy, and matters were carried not so much in a disputative way, but by way of friendly collation and loving discourse, it would much conduce to the ending of our differences; certainly, where such meetings have been set up and wisely ordered, much good hath

come by them. If we could allure Christians, the lot of whose dwellings is disposed among our churches, into these conferences, we should find them of much avail. I conceive much might be said out of scripture for them; certainly we do not come together so often as we should, to comfort ourselves with the mutual faith of one another.' Rom. i. 11, 12. I believe that episunagoge`n spoken of Heb. x. 25, will infer some other meeting besides the public assembly. This benefit you would find by such a course, that your own would be stablished, others would be less violent. If brought to these friendly consultations, haply it may be a business that may engage you to much labour and self-denial; but that should not sway with a Christian minister, whose work is not ended with an hour's discourse in the pulpit. We are very often calling for power to punish heretics; but let us sadly smite upon the thigh, and consider if any of us in private have improved those loving courses to gain them that have been in our power. Luther hath a pretty saying: Igne caritatis comburendi sunt haeretici--you talk of burning heretics, burn them first in the fire of love, or, at least, burn them with the fire of the Spirit. The apostle speaketh of trying the work by fire,' 1 Cor. iii. 13. Rational and friendly conviction will do much, at least it will beget a sweet and brotherly correspondence, and it is to be hoped we shall find more meekness where things are not carried in the way of a set disputation.

I have done with my address to the ministry.

Thirdly, Give me leave to speak a word to yourselves, not as if I would prescribe to you, but only humbly offer two or three considerations to your thoughts. It may be I may not show so much discretion in it, yet, if I do affection, I have my aim, which is not so much to direct you, as to draw you into a consultation about these matters; and therefore I humbly propose the business to your care. Think of the church's unity;

you have covenanted to endeavour that the Lord be one, and his name one.' Consider, civil peace depends much upon church peace; religion is called so a religando, it being the greatest bond to link men together; contrary opinions in religion usually cause much alienation of affection, and great disturbances in the common wealth. Therefore this matter appertaineth to you in reference to unity. I humbly desire:--

1. That you would seriously do your utmost to draw things to an agreement. You have appointed a committee of accommodation already: we do not know what is done; suppose you tried once again. When the Remonstrants troubled the churches of the Low Countries, there were often collations, and they did select men once and again and again to consider how to compose the differences. [198] It is true, those endeavours did not succeed, because those meetings were made up of the most violent sticklers; and the Arminians, by the means of Utenbogardus, had the secret encouragement and countenance of some of the magistrates, that nothing should be done to their disservice and disadvantage, and so both parties strove to make the best of their opinion and faction. But now, if you would be pleased to try once again, God knows what will be the success. I suppose there can be no danger in trying. Call some men together, whose eminency for the power of godliness will make the matter the more venerable, entertained with the more reverence and awe. When the people smell self and interest in any endeavours, they have the less majesty with them. Call men through age and experience versed in such a work, men of a moderate and sober spirit, who prefer the interest of religion before that of a party.

Blessed be God, England doth not want such! Call them together to think of ways of reconciliation. Though many thirst and pant after it, yet cannot effect it, being but private men, and so not so much regarded, and in bodies and assemblies they cannot so well drive it on. Men of

middle interests, being always suspected, have a prejudice upon their endeavours; and, indeed, good men cannot be imagined to be so without all touch and sense of their own particular opinion, as not to dispute, stickle, and engage for it in such bodies and assemblies. But now, if such were called together by your authority, to make it their only work to provide for the advantage of religion, and to compose the differences, possibly, and by the blessing of God, much good might be done. However, you will manifest that you have not been wanting to your duty; and therefore weigh it in your thoughts.

2. That you would quicken your ministers and elders, in their provincial and classical meetings, by some charge and command to think of ways how best to gain and deal with dissensions. The matter is not below the care of a Christian magistrate. Histories tell us how Constantine did beseech his bishops to an agreement, oversee their counsels, travail in the peace of the churches. Socrates saith he was affected with the schisms of the church as his own calamity. [199] Well, then, if you would be pleased to quicken them by your command, and enable them by your authority to find out and to act in such ways as may tend to the ending of the differences and controversies, much good might be done. I humbly conceive the true nature and intent of such meetings is not altogether or chiefly to give laws authoritatively to the particular churches, as to consider how to compose differences that do arise in them; and it were sad if the mint and cummin were preferred above the weighty works, and the chief of their care were spent either in trivial disputes, or in making rules for their own rather than in studying all brotherly ways of gaining those that differ, and healing the breaches of the church. This, I say, were sad indeed; the true intent and nature of these meetings being to give satisfaction, and to carry things with more clearness of demonstration,

and to give out the sense of the church in matters of difficulty: for, indeed, the less of a court and the more of a council they have in them the better; therefore, if you would command and chiefly commend these things of unity to their care and debates, some hope might arise that way.

3. That you would take care that ministers put out for scandal may not be so easily taken in again. Against those that are humbly penitent and modestly ingenuous, no man would open his mouth; but for the others, I am persuaded they are, and will be, a great means of our troubles; partly as they occasion no small offence to the godly; the dead body of Amasa in the way to discourage the people of the Lord from going on to union and accord; the sons of Eli, that cause many to abhor the offering of the Lord: partly as those that are very apt to be the cinifloes that will blow up the coals of strife amongst us. The first stirs about religion in the Low Countries were occasioned by the ministers of the old leaven, whom they were fain to take in out of necessity in that scarcity of ministers, and to allow some of them, because of their parts, in eminent places. The story nameth Wiggerus, Coelhaasius, and others, who kindled those sparks of trouble, which afterwards were blown up by James Arminius into a great flame. [200] Many observe that the Jesuits go over to the Lutherans and foment differences between them and the Reformed; and truly we may fear their influence; men that have the old malice and a new irritation will stir in a way of revenge. The Lord guide you! I am sorry to hear the complaints that are abroad.

4. In the liberty that you give, use great caution. Some things you may be forced to bear with for a time; take heed of endangering the truth of God; you ought to be tender of Christ's little ones; woe to those that offend them, Mat. xviii. But you ought to be more tender of

Christ's truths; you owe somewhat to Christ's saints and servants, but, I say again, more to his truths. It is somewhat un heard of that these two should come in contest and competition. However, you will find Christ more jealous of his ways than of his servants, of his truths than of his saints. It is truth makes saints: John xvii. 27, Sanctify them by thy truth, thy word is truth;' and husbandmen are ever more careful of their seed-corn than of the increase; and, besides, we may be deceived in saints--we do not know hearts; but we cannot so easily in truths, because there is a sure standard to measure them by. Therefore, take heed of doing any thing against truth. It is a good old caution, In veste varietas sit scissura non sit--though there be divers colours, yet let there be no rent in the church's coat. I will not take upon me to state the matter; what liberty you may give, and how far. Perhaps that may be un seasonable. However it will not, I hope, be too much presumption to present you with the most obvious miscarriages of magistrates in this matter. Three sorts of men there are in the world, and concerning every one of them we may say, The way of peace they have not known.' Rom. iii. 17.

[1.] Some are of a preposterous zeal in lesser differences, and are all for extremity and violence towards those from whom they differ in the least degree and circumstances. Most of the censures inflicted by the late bishops were because of ceremonies, things not weighty in any regard, no, not in their own esteem. Some men breathe out nothing but rage and threatenings upon the least dissent.

I remember I have read of Joab, David's general, that when his teacher had falsely vowelled one word in the Hebrew, he slew him; the place was that charge to destroy Zechar. He read it Zachar, the males of Amalek. [201] It is good to preserve truth, but small distempers will not need so violent a cure. It is as if a man should fire a house to destroy the

mice in it. Union is good, but rigorous enforcements, especially in trifles, and things that lie far from the heart of religion, are not so warrantable. Paul is everywhere most zealous against errors; there is never an epistle of his but hath somewhat against them; however, none more earnest than he to bring circumcision and uncircumcision to a profession of brotherhood.

[2.] Some are for medleys and compounds of religion, as if that would be peace. Thus Charles V. thought to please all by that wicked book called the Interim; it did a great deal of harm, and did not any way heal the difference. Many of late amongst us, and in other reformed churches, endeavoured to blend us and Rome, Babylon and Zion, together. God hateth those iniquos syncretismos, profane mixtures and intermistical designs. Unity consists in an agreement in the truth, not in a coagulation of errors. Strings that are in tune must not be stirred, others must be set up to them. The disobedient must be brought up to the wisdom of the just, not that brought down to them, Luke i. 17. When the language is pure' the shoulder is one, Zeph. iii. 9. Little hopes of agreement till you set up pure doctrine, unmixed discipline. The new cloth set upon the old will make the rent the greater. The world thinks the less purity the more unity, but it is otherwise. All the troubles are because iron will not mix with clay, God's ways with man's inventions.

[3.] Some drive at a promiscuous leave and toleration of all opinions and differences, though never so contrary to truth, as if this were the best way to bring things to any peace and quiet. Oh! consider how great a prejudice this is to religion. This is the very way that Julian, the apostate, took to destroy it. Socrates Scholasticus, Ammianus Marcellinus, and others that write of him, say that, to ruin religion, he would equally tolerate and countenance all parties. I shall but take

notice of what one saith, [202] that he was thoroughly set upon this, as knowing it to be the ready way to bring all to naught; and, indeed, it was not only the policy of this subtle adversary, but of all the enemies of truth, as the margin will inform you. [203] And, in deed, where it doth not destroy religion, it doth embase it, partly because men content themselves in having made a better choice than others about them; partly because men spend all the heat and first born of their strength and zeal in the contentions, and let practice go. Certainly there would be but little security to truth and its followers where there is such a promiscuous toleration. Where men are godly they cannot be so easily amassed into one body and confederacy with persons erroneous; they being bound up by conscience, and having religion on their sides, are not so flexible, and then the others cannot so well agree with them, for two different errors can better agree and cotton among themselves than one error and the nearest truth. Darkness and darkness can better agree than light and darkness: always you will find it, men hate the nearest truth as being that light by which their deeds are reproved. The Eunomians and the Arians, though they held different errors (the one denied the Godhead of the Son, the other of the Spirit), could better agree with one an other than with the orthodox. The Pharisees and Herodians, though of different principles (the one being for, the other against the liberty of the Jews), yet both could conspire together to entrap Christ. Gebal and Ammon and Amalek could better accord with one another than with Zion. In such a case truth would be worst provided for; always under fears of some Sicilian vespers or a Saint Bartholomew's matins, some sudden eruption of violent counsels and dangers hatched against it.

Thus I have been bold to commend a few things unto you. God direct your hearts to all seasonable counsels, for his glory and the church's good!

Object. But you will say, This a work of time. What is to be done to avoid the danger of the present distractions?

Sol. I answer--That question is to be put to God, not man: Ps. xi. 3, If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do,' i.e., if religion, laws, authority, and all have lost their awe, what can they do? The answer is in the next verse: God is in the holy temple,' i.e., there is a God above, one in heaven, go to him. I suppose you are met this day, as those at Ahava, to seek a right way, Ezra. viii. 21; when we are at a loss and past the help of means, the address may be the better made to God.

2. If you go to God, you must go to him in his own way. How is that? You shall see Job xxxiv. 31, Surely it is meet to be said to God, I have borne the chastisement of mine iniquity; I will offend no more.' This is meet for you to be said to God, to come before him with humiliation and reformation.

[1.] With humiliation. Sadly reflect upon your miscarriages. I would not willingly declaim upon that theme; too many do. It is natural to us to speak evil of dignities: envy would blast eminency. Some are mad upon idols; they will blemish you, for you have vexed them. Others are burdened with payments, and they will say, The former times were better than these,' Eccles. vii. 10. Haply Solomon relateth to his own times. They complain of Solomon's yokes, though occasioned by the temple work in those days. Some affect the repute of bold men; it feeds the humour of the times to lay things to your charge. The Lord make others more sober, and you more humble! It is your duty to smite upon the thigh. Surely there is a cause, when there were such great distractions that they groped like a blind man, and could not find the way. They said, Our iniquities are with us; as for our transgressions, we know them,' Isa. lix. 10-12. When those that speak tremblings are little feared,

surely there is some offence, Hosea xiii. 1. Commune with your own hearts; guilt works best when it results from your own consciences; being represented from without; it irritateth; sweetly arising from within, it humbleth. What is the matter then? Have you dealt with God so faithfully, with the people so kindly, as you should? Have grievances been redressed, justice executed, the glory of God's house provided for? I remember a story in Plutarch of Demetrius, king of Macedonia, [204] who, when his subjects tendered their petitions to him of having their grievances redressed, he cast them into a river: afterward Seleucus the Great came with an army against him; not a man would stir; he was taken prisoner, and deprived of his kingdom. People will bear any thing rather than neglects of justice. Consider these things. Come with humiliation.

[2.] Come with purposes of reformation: I will do so no more.' Do your first works if you would recover your lost glory. You know by what insinuations Absalom stole away the hearts of the people; by those of justice and kindness. He kissed them. He did perjicere oscula, adorare vulgus, as the historian saith of Otho; and you know he said, 2 Sam. xv. 4, Oh! that I were a judge in the land, then I would do them justice; and it would be sad if corruptions be found in you when distractions are upon you. It is said of the assembly of the gods,' that had not done justice to the afflicted, nor defended the poor widow and fatherless, Ps. lxxxii. 5, That they know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness, though the foundations of the land be out of course;' they continued in perverting justice and right, though God ruined the commonwealth and plucked it asunder. Oh! let it be never said of you; it shall be my prayer to God for you.

[180] Ipsum nomen perperam a vobis pronunciatur Chrestianus.'--Tertull. in Apol., cap. cccx.

[181] Pollou`s christiani'zein ape'trepen e diaphoni'a ton dogmaton.'

[182] Venit Gentilis quidam et dicit, Vellem fieri Christianus, sed nescio cui parti adhaeream; multae enim sunt inter vos pugnae, seditiones et tumultus: nescio quod dogma eligam, quod praeferam, singuli enim dicunt, Ego verum dico. Hanc ob causam ridiculo facti sumus et Gentilibus et Judaeis, dum ecclesia in mille partes scinditur.' &c.--Chrys. in Epist. ad Galat., cap. i.

[183] Nusquam citius preficitur quam in castris rebellium, nunc neophytos collocant, nunc saeculo obstrictos, nunc apostatas nostros, ut gloria eos obligent quos veritate nou possuut.'--Tertul. lib. de Prescrip. Adversus Haereticos, cap. xli.

[184] Non sanguis sed causa facit martyrem.'

[185] Perkinsius Epist. ad Leot. Harm. Bibl.

[186] Ludolfus de Vita Christi, lib. ii. cap. 87.

[187] Inter juvenile judicium et senile prejudicium omnis veritas corrumpitur.'

[188] Vide Tertullianum hoc fusius et eleganter persequentem sub initio Apologetici adversus Gentes.

[189] Tertull. lib. de Praescript adversus Haereticos, cap. xli.

[190] Qui referre injuriam nititur, eum ipsum a quo laesus est gestit imitari; ita qui malum imitatur bonus esse nullo pacto potest.'--Lactant. de Vero Cultu. lib. vi. cap 18.

[191] Tertul. in Apol., cap. 39.

[192] Nullae infestae hominibus bestiae ut sunt sibi ferales plerumque Christiani.'--Ammia. Marcelli. lib ii. cap. 2.

[193] Nazian. in Carmine 12 ad Constantinapolitanos.

[194] Hoc haereticorurn negotium est, non ethnicos convertendi, sed nostros evertendi; nostra suffodiunt, sua aedificant.'--Tertull. lib. de Praescript. adversus Haereticos, cap. 42.

[195] De quo postea restitutus nunquam coutendendum putavit, minime tamen dissimulans quid alioquin esset probaturus.'--Beza in Vita Calvini.

[196] Pamelius in Vita Tertulliani.

[197] Alternis vicibus contentioso fune uterque diem in vesperam traximus, obstrepentibus etiarn. quibusdam spectantibus singulorum nubilo quodam veritas obumbrabatur.'

[198] See the History of the Council of Dort in the Preface to the Reformed Churches.

[199] See Socrates' Eccles. Hist., lib. i. cap. 7, in the Greek, et alius passim.

[200] Amabilem Belgicarum Ecclesiarum pacem atque harmoniam perturbare conati sunt olim nonnulli, qui deserto Papismo, sed fermento ejus nondum plene expurgato ad ecclesias nostras transierant, earumdemque ministerio in prima illa ministrorum inopia admoti fuerant, Casperus Coelhasius Leidae, Hermanus Herbertus Goudae et Dordrecti,' &c.--Vide Historiam. Syn. Dord. in Praef. ad Ecclesias sub initio.

[201] The remembrance of Amalek, Deut. xxv. 19.--Ed.

[202] Quod agebat ideo obstinate, ut dissentientem augente licentia non timeret minantem postea plebem,' &c.--Petrus Morentimus in Praefat. in Juliani miso-pugionem.

[203] Passim cum omnibus miscent, nihil enim interest illis licet diversa tractantibun dum ad unius veritatis expugnationem exspirent.'--Ter. lib. de Praescrip. Adversus Haeret., cap. 41.

[204] Plutarchus in Vita Demetrii.

THE EPISTLE DEDICATORY.

WITH

THE CAUSES AND CURE:

DISCOVERED IN A SERMON PREACHED BEFORE THE HONOURABLE HOUSE OF COMMONS, ON THEIR SOLEMN DAY OF FAST, AT MARGARET'S, WESTMINSTER, JUNE 28, 1648.

To the Honourable House of Commons now assembled in Parliament.

YOU were pleased to require my service on your late day of fast, as you had done on the same occasion just a twelvemonth before. I desired to speak seasonably then, and now too. The Lord directed my thoughts then to a subject of peace,--our distractions were great, and now to treat of zeal,--our destruction, we fear, draweth nigh. These two things may well stand together, love and zeal; and if men were wise, James iii. 18, the fruit of righteousness might be sown in peace, and such concord effected between brethren, wherein religion may not suffer. I know there are two parties that will never be accorded the seed of the woman, and the seed of the serpent; there will be enmity. But is not there a wise man among us? not one that shall be able to judge between brethren? 1 Cor. vi. 5. I speak not this to flatter with a general offer; I have always disliked general invectives against error, and general proposals of peace. [205] This were to deal in names rather than things, and to seduce the soul into a hope of that which is far enough from being accomplished. Neither do I speak it to cool any man's zeal; the drift of this sermon is to kindle it. Godliness cannot be without a holy heat. Those that suffer under persecution will contend against delusion, that is but a duty; and it were to be wished it were more done, and more regularly. Certainly some have been too silent

whilst the truths of God have been made void; [206] therefore, we are far from condemning any such vigorous opposition of the present errors. I only mention it as an expression of my desires and hopes.

For the present discourse, the style of it, I confess, is too turbid, and hath too much of inculcation in it to be fit for the press, and therefore I should have adjudged it to keep company with some other neglected papers, but that, in obedience to your order, and condescension to the requests of some friends, I have now made it public; and, my employment being much, am forced to send it forth without refining. I do not know what blessing the Lord, whose power is usually perfected in weakness, 2 Cor. xii. 9, may ordain by it. I desire to wait upon him, commending it to his grace.

In many things I have freely expressed myself, and possibly some may think, uncovered our own nakedness. The mouth of iniquity is soon opened; and it is hard to speak against the sins of religious persons without giving some advantage to religious enemies. All that I shall say to this is, that offenders give the scandal, not the reprover. I confess, I like rolling in the dust at Aphrah, Micah i. 10, that Gath may not know it; but when offences are public, it were an injury to religion to be silent. We cannot do it a greater right than to declare and witness against such miscarriages; and, therefore, when the house of Jacob offendeth, it must be told its own with a full throat. [207]

It will be our honour to shake off the vipers upon a discovery, though they would still stick on. But for the enemies;--

Nullane habent vitia? immo alia haud foriasse minora: [208]

are they so innocent as to be able to cast the stone at us? John viii. 7. Shall they that have wounds upbraid us with scars? [209] and they that halt downright, charge us with tripping? or the blackamore object spots to a fair woman? Let them first pluck out their own beam, and

then possibly they may understand what an injury it is, and a wicked malice, to throw personal guilt in religion's face, and out of a dislike to one Mordecai, to seek the destruction of all the Jews, Esther iii. 6, and to charge that upon the order which is but the just blemish of some persons sheltered under the name and pretence of it. As Nazianzen speaketh of some: Oi kataitiontai to`n no'mon auto`n os kaki'as dida'skalon, kai` malisth' o'tan pollois entu'chosi ponerois ton prostasi'as exiome'non: that for some bishops' sake accuse Christianity itself as an evil law. [210]

For yourselves, right honourable, I beseech you, remember religion flourishing will be your defence; and that it is better to trust God with your protection, than to fly to ill counsels, [211] or condescensions, whereby you may gain the respects of men. The Lord grant that you may live up to such a principle; and in these times of violence, do nothing unworthy of God, or of his oath that is upon you.

So prayeth your meanest servant in the Lord's work,

Tho. Manton.

[205] Qui pacem tractat non repetitis conditionibus dissidii, is magis animos dulcedine pacis fallit quam aequitate componit.'

[206] Me'pote katagino'sko me`n tes thermo'tetos,' &c.--Naz. Orat. de Moderat. in Disput.

[207] Isa. lviii. 1, opened to this purpose by Mr Richard Vines in the morning.

[208] Horatius.

[209] Ta` trau'mata e'chontes, kai` tou`s mo'lopas oneidi'zontes, oi' ta` prosko'mmata diasu'rontes kai768 ta` pto'mata autoi` paschontes, oi en to borbo'ro enkulindro'menoi, kai` tois omi'lois emon epeuphraino'menoi.'--Nazinanz. de inimicis Ecclesiae, Orat. l. 13.

[210] Naz. Orat. 14.

[211] Admonendi suntpacis auctores ne dum pacem nimis diligant, et cum omnibus quaerant, consentiendo perversis ab auctoris sui se pace disjungant, ne dum humana foris jurgia metuant, interni foederis discussione feriantur.'--Ambros.

Chapter 30

ENGLAND'S SPIRITUAL LANGUISHING;

WITH

THE CAUSES AND CURE.

Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die; for I have not found thy works perfect before God.--Rev. III. 2.

IN scriptures wherein the expression is anything more difficult, wits are most rank and luxuriant, every one taking a liberty to affix his own sense there, where the true and genuine sense is not so obvious and easily found out; and because two or three false interpretations may be asserted with equal probability, the scriptures have suffered as an uncertain rule, or nose of wax (it is the blasphemy of the Papists), which is ductile and pliable to every fancy and purpose. The truth is, we are more happy in discovering falsehood than in clearing truth, and those which come after can more easily discern wherein others have halted and are defective, than reach the truth themselves. I have always looked upon that as a grave observation, [212] Facilius est aliorum convellere sententias quam stabilire propriam--men are always better at confuting than confirming; in which, though I am strengthened by the censure of Jerome on Lactantius, [213] who observed that his arguments were more valid and strong which he brought against false worships, than those other by which he confirmed the true; and Tully wished he could as easily find out the true God as disprove the false. [214] Whether it be through that natural desire that is in us to blemish others, or from the weakness and imperfection of our apprehensions, or from an obstinate prejudice against divine truths, or from God's hiding and reserving many things till the age next their accomplishment, I will not now dispute. I only hint it to show that

therefore it is why men have disputed so unhappily, and with such variety, about some difficult places of scripture, always acquitting themselves with more honour, success, and satisfaction in disproving the opinion of others, than in vindicating and clearing their own.

As this hath been the fate of other scriptures, so especially of this book of the Revelation, wherein there are as many mysteries as words; and all matters, as is usual in prophecies, veiled under expressions which are of a mystic sense and interpretation. [215] Above all other parts of the book, the three first chapters are most plain and easy to be understood, though here also difficulties want not. For my part, I shall not trouble you with the several thoughts of men about these chapters. The noise of axe and hammer should not be heard in the temple; these discussions better become the study than the pulpit.

Let it suffice to note that the main contents of them are several epistles sent from Jesus Christ by John to the seven churches of Asia.

But here a doubt ariseth, why a Catholic prophecy, such as is calculated for the church in general, and all ages of it, should begin with epistles to these particular churches. What may be the reason of this? Ans. It is so, partly because the gospel did here first eminently flourish, and the Spirit of God foresaw that the malice of Satan would also first powerfully invade and overrun these churches, and so engage them to the wrath of God; [216] partly because of John's particular relation and apostolical presidency over these churches, wherein the Spirit of God condescendeth to that natural inquisitiveness and desire that we have to know what shall become of our own; and therefore being about to reveal to him the state of all the churches, he beginneth with those to whom he stood in particular bond and relation.

But why to the seven churches in Asia, since there were more planted in that tract and country? [217] I answer--again--It may be partly because

of the prophetical perfection of this number, which is every where in scripture solemn and sacred, and with which the Spirit of God seemeth most delighted in this prophecy; and, therefore, we hear of seven stars, seven spirits, seven candlesticks, seven lamps, seven seals, seven angels, seven trumpets, seven vials, seven thunders of the dragon with seven heads, the city with seven hills, the beast with seven horns; and, therefore, that the beginning of the prophecy might carry proportion with the rest of it, wherein all things are set forth under the typical figure of this number, he writeth to the seven churches of Asia. And partly because in these seven churches, which were the most eminent, there was found enough to represent the state, graces, evils of all churches in all ages; and indeed the pattern and type is so complete and perfect, that by an easy and fair accommodation it may be applied to all other churches that are not named here, for in them God was pleased to give the world a document and experience of all those judgments and dispensations which he would exercise towards other churches offending and declining in the same manner.

One question more, and we have done with this general view, and that is, Why all these epistles are directed to the several angels, or respective ministries of the churches, since the drift of them concerneth the whole body of the people? I answer--Either because they were notoriously guilty of the offences charged, and so by example propagated their own taint and profaneness among the people; or through oscitancy and carelessness suffered corruptions to creep in upon others; or else because all dispensations from Christ were to pass through their hands to the church; and so the regular way of transmitting these epistles was by means of the angel or eldership.

Other general observations there are, but I quit them, desiring to fall upon the epistle we have in hand. The text is a part of the epistle to

the church of Sardis, which was a flourishing and rich city, the seat of the kings of Lydia. In it you have:--

1. An inscription: To the angel of the church of Sardis,' write. You see it is inscribed, as all the rest are, to the angel of the church;' that is, to the ministry, who, because of their subserviency to the salvation of the elect, and that resemblance that is between their function and the angel's office, are expressed by that term, and though they were many, yet they are expressed in the singular number, angel, to note their union and combination in a body and society. To this angel write, in which word he produceth his warrant and authority. We cannot threaten churches in our own name; Christ must first say, Write. The priests under the law were to have their ears tipped with blood, Exod. xxix. 20. Christ must command and inspire, as he doth John here, Write. [218]

2. A description of Christ, the author of this epistle, These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars.' The seven Spirits, that is, the Holy Ghost, who is called so because of the plenty, perfection, and variety of his gracious operations and influences; and, therefore, in the old hymn of the church, it was said to the Holy Ghost, Tu septiformis munere; and it is said Christ hath these seven Spirits, that is, hath power to send the Holy Ghost, who always acteth as Christ's Spirit, with reference to his merit and intercession; therefore it is said, John xiv. 15, He shall take of mine and show it you.' Christ taketh this title upon him now to show that he had Spirit enough to quicken dead Sardis, seven Spirits, when he writeth to a languishing church. The next part of the description is and the seven stars;' these are expounded Rev. i. 20. And the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches;' so that the stars note the subordinate ministries which Christ is said to have, because he

appointeth them, gifteth them, assists them in their office and functions.

3. The occasion of the epistle, which is taken from the state of the church, which was well enough known to God, and therefore it is prefaced thus, I know thy works,' a phrase that is used to all the rest of the churches, but is most proper to Sardis, whose crime objected is, hypocrisy and pretence. Oh! how should it startle hypocrites to hear God say, I know thy works.' It implieth Christ's strict and severe observation of what is done among his people; his eyes are every where, but he observeth the church: Cant. vi. 11, He goeth down into the gardens to see the fruits of the valleys; to see whether the vines flourished, and the pomegranates budded;' phrases which imply a narrow inspection.

The state of the church is described two ways:--

[1.] By its repute and renown among other churches, they did judge and speak well of her: Thou hast a name that thou livest'--i.e., thou art reputed to be eminent for faith, piety, and the power of godliness, and goest for an excellent church in thine own conceit and the opinion of others; a church is then said to live when it receiveth the grace of life, and expresseth the life of grace, and name is taken for repute and renown.

[2.] By the judgment of Jesus Christ--but art dead.' Thy condition is not correspondent to the report that goeth of thee. The churches that judge well of thee are deceived; for though there be much profession, yet very little of the power of truth and godliness is found in thee, which is here expressed by death.

4. The next things observable is the counsel of Christ, and direction to this languishing church, and that is in the verse read: Be watchful, and strengthen the things that are ready to die,' &c.

In which counsel of Christ to his church you may observe:--

[1.] An excitation, Be watchful.'

[2.] A direction, Strengthen the things which remain, which are ready to die.'

[3.] A conviction to set on both the former parts, For I have not found thy works perfect before God.'

The main duty is in the middle, the first part being laid down by way of preparative to it, and the third by way of reason and enforcement. Therefore, though I shall explain the whole verse, yet I shall single out the middle clause for larger and more special discussion.

[1.] I begin with the excitation, which, as I said, was laid down by way of preparation for the other duty: Be watchful,'--i.e., look to it, see whereunto these things will grow. Such sad beginnings should make you consider and observe your sins, and provide against your judgments. Holy watchfulness and observation is the first step to amendment; and when people begin to understand the approaches of wrath, they are in a fair way to prevent them. There cannot be such a grey hair, or a sadder intimation of swift destruction, than a secure and careless inadvertency. The first thing pressed is, Be watchful.'

[2.] You may look upon the conviction, which is brought as a reason why they should watch, or recover their former height in godliness: For I have not found thy works perfect before God.' Whatever men think of them, they are not so holy and entire as to be able to endure my trial. Things in a scripture sense are said to be pepkerome'na, full and perfect, when they are sincere and sound, without hypocrisy and guile; and therefore Caleb's integrity is expressed by fulfilling after God, or following of God fully, Num. xiv. 24; he understandeth such a perfect and full growth as keepeth things from languishing or dying away.

[3.] The next thing now is the direction or main duty pressed: Strengthen the things that remain, which are ready to die.' There were ta` loipa`, some sorry remains of religion and godliness, to quicken or strengthen which he addeth a reason, a' me'llei apothanein, which shall die. The same kind of Greek expression is used concerning the centurion's servant, when he was at the point of death, which is expressed by e'melle teleutan, Luke vii. 2. They are even languishing and expiring; unless you strengthen and repair them, they are utterly lost and gone. The word that expresseth their duty is ste'rixon, settle or establish them, which implieth not only a care to keep them from expiration, but to recover them to their former height and radiancy; and, therefore, a like matter is expressed by the apostle Paul in another word, for he biddeth Timothy anazopurein, stir or blow up the gift of God in him, 2 Tim. i. 6.

There is nothing of difficulty in the clause, only it doth not so easily appear, since they are not specified in the text, what are those ta` loipa`, those remains of religion, which he urgeth them to strengthen.

How shall we know what they are? Ans. It cannot be meant of persons, as some would have it, understanding it of the weak of the flock, for it is ta` loipa`, things, not persons; and truly it must be something concerning the vitals of religion; such, which, if revived, would make them live and flourish again in the sight of God and of the churches. Now, doctrinals it cannot be, for the reason rendered in the latter part of the text, For I have not found thy works perfect before God.' It is some decay in practicals, thy works, ta` e'rga; and if they had decayed in doctrinals, they could not have so much as a name that they lived. And then mere discipline it cannot be, for howsoever that be a great preservation to godliness, and a considerable stake in religion's

hedge, yet the corruption or intermission of discipline cannot so properly be termed the death of the church. It is, I remember, if some expound the place right, called the sleep of the church, Cant. vi. 2, I sleep, but my heart waketh.' Brightman [219] applieth it to the church about the third century, which was watchful over doctrine; the heart waked, but carelessly digested the corruption and degeneration of discipline, and therefore she is said to sleep, but it is nowhere called death; and it cannot be mere discipline, though some regard may be had thereunto. And therefore principally it is meant of some few poor relics of languishing godliness, like sparks under the ashes which needed blowing up. [220] The sum of all is, I hope you will be stirred up by this admonition to prevent your death, and utter languishing in religion, that decayed godliness may have its former power, efficacy, and glory. I look upon the text as a counsel to a church, not to private Christians. I confess it is applied to them by most, because it yieldeth conceptus praedicabiles, as they call them, much preaching matter concerning the languishing and decay of grace in Christians. I cannot say this is excluded, because the part followeth the reason of the whole, but I rather look upon it, and so shall handle it, in a public regard.

The point is:--

Doct. That a special way to save a church and people from immi nent and speedy ruin is the repairing of decayed godliness.

It is Christ's counsel to Sardis, lest he should come upon them as a thief, that is, bring a sudden and unthought-of destruction. Give me leave to parallel it but with one place, and then I shall proceed to the reasons. It is the counsel to Ephesus, Rev. ii. 5, Do thy first works, or else I will come to thee quickly and remove thy candlestick,' &c. Recovering religion to its former height is made a means of

preventing God's coming in judgment; and it is there expressed by first works.' because religion at the first coming is entertained with more genuine simplicity, and zealous earnestness, as stuffs in their first making are strongly wrought, and is full of life and power; therefore do thy first works.

Reason 1. Because by this means you take away that which will be the cause of ruin. God delighteth to make the outward estate to carry proportion with the inward; as we decay in godliness, so our outward happiness languisheth, and the hand of mercy is slackened. How easily may a wise Christian read his guilt in his condition, and from his outward decays understand his inward! And truly it is so in commonwealths too, their fate followeth the state of religion. God meteth to us in our own measure; instances want not: Ye have forsaken me, and therefore I have left you,' 2 Chron. xii. 5. Rulers rebel against God, and their people rebel against them, therefore is there a tumult among thy people,' Hosea xiv. 10. Friends are alienated and estranged from them, because their hearts are first estranged from God; there are confusions in the church, and then what followeth? distractions in the state. It was grave advice which the English divines gave the Dutch magistrates in the Synod of Dort, [221] that they should take heed lest, by their connivance at church disorders which they could help, they did not draw on state tumults and factions, which, when they would, they could not help. Truly this is God's course, to retaliate with the creature; and, as I said before, to make their outward condition answer their inward. Religion is, as it were, the soul of the commonwealth. Now, the state of the body dependeth much upon the good temper of the soul, it being linked to it by the affections, as so many pins and nails. A troubled soul discomposeth the body, but a cheerful mind cureth it; so religion and godliness, as it

thriveth, maketh us thrive. God challengeth his people to avouch one instance when ever they lost by it, Jer. ii. 5, What iniquity have your fathers found in me?' and ver. 13. O ye generation! have I been a wilderness or a land of darkness to you?' Did ever godliness do you hurt? If you can, do but produce one experience! If you will believe Polycarp upon his own trial--and let me tell you he was an old Mnason, and had much trial of God--he will inform you, ogdoe'konta kai` e`x e'te douleu'o auto, kai` oude'n me edi'kesen, &c. For my part, saith he, I can speak of eighty-six years; I have been his servant so long, and he never did me harm. And truly, notwithstanding the prejudices that are abroad, we may come in with the like attestation, godliness never did us harm; when it thrived and was vigorous, we thrived, and sensibly felt the benefits of the power of it. See how God appealeth to men in this matter, Micah ii. 7, Are these his doings? do not my words do good to him that walketh uprightly?' See the meaning of that place a little: Are these his doings?' Speaking of the troubles, do you think these are the fruits of religion? or of your endeavours for the advancement of it? No; your own souls know that my words have done you good, yielded you much comfort and deliverance; you were happy as long as you kept in that way. And therefore, now, if you would take away the cause of ruin, and redress the disorders of the commonwealth, repair the decays of religion, do what you can to restore that to its former power and efficacy.

Reason 2. Because, by outward success, God will visibly declare his delight in such eminent works as these are, and therefore setteth his heart to bless and prosper such a people, who set their hearts to repair decayed religion. And God doth it the rather, partly because of the prejudice that is upon godliness; as men cast most honour upon the parts most uncomely, so doth God most blessing and comfort upon a

despised grace. Men accuse it as the only makebate, and in the world's eye it is the cause of want, and sword, and famine, Jer. xliv. 18; and therefore God attesteth and witnesseth from heaven that it is the only pledge of a blessing; the more we are prejudiced, the more free is God in honouring it; and partly because of his own delight in it; it is a grace that giveth all to God, and therefore God doth all for it. He dealeth with it as Caleb with his dear daughter Achsah; he giveth her the upper and the nether springs, Josh. xv. 19, the blessings of this life and that to come, 1 Tim. iv. 8; for as all the motions and tendencies of godliness are to exalt God, so all God's aims and dispensations are to exalt godliness, and therefore is it that we do so often hear of a blessing upon all endeavours, especially such as are eminent and public, that look that way: see Hag, ii. 19, From this day forward will I bless you;' that is, from the day that they took care of the temple, God would have them observe if their hopes and happiness did not thrive from that day forward. So 2 Chron. vii. 11, All that came into Solomon's heart to make in his own house, and the house of the Lord, he prosperously effected.' Those two cares thrive the better for one another; the Lord's house made him prosper the better in building his own, for God is resolutely engaged to let the world know what shall be done to the grace which he will honour. So see Isa. iv. 4, Upon the glory there shall be a defence.' By the glory is meant the church reformed or made more holy, for that is the excellency and glory of it; God and his people being both glorious in holiness.' Compare Exod. xv. 9, with Eph. v. 27. Now upon this glory there will be a covering or defensive shelter, as there was of badgers' skins over the glory of the tabernacle.

Reason 3. Because this is the straightest and most direct way to safety. In all other policies there are a great many serpentine

windings and intricacies, whereby the event is not half so sure and easy. In desperate cases it is best to take the ready way; and that is, the repairing of religion. It is ill when religion is but policy; but it is as it should be when our policy is religion. Though the troubles are by men, yet our work doth not so much lie with man as with God. We begin at the right end, when we begin with him; for by making God a friend you may the better get in with men. To set on this reason, take a few considerations.

1. Without God men can do you no good; dependence on the Lord is the best security, and the surest policy is trusting God rather than men. They are weak and faithless, and so will fail you when there is most need. The people are unstable as waters, and their respects are dispensed with much uncertainty: to-day they cry up, and to-morrow they cry down things; to secure themselves they will desert those that have done them most good: as the Keilites were ready to give up David after he had delivered them, as soon as Saul had any force in Israel, 1 Sam. xxiii. 11. If they keep true, their power to help may be gone. God kindleth courage and quencheth it at pleasure:. Ezek. vii. 14, They have blown the trumpet to make all ready, but none goeth to the battle, for my wrath is upon all the multitude thereof.' There were great preparations, but their hearts failed them. Truly there is nothing preserveth states so much as God's power over the spirits of men, and nothing which you ought to regard and heed so much as that. Bodies without hearts are a disadvantage, and their hearts are in God's hands. All outward strength and support lieth in the movable respects of the people; for so they are in themselves, it is God only that can fix and make them sure.

2. With God men can do you no harm; he is with them that are careful to establish and set up his worship, and then they need not care who are

against them: see 2 Chron. xxviii. There is a story of Sennacherib's coming up against Jerusalem in the first verse; the time is specially noted: After these things and the establishment thereof;' that is, after Hezekiah had established the worship of God, which circumstance is mentioned chiefly to note the occasion of Hezekiah's confidence; for see how he disvalues him upon this: ver. 8, With him is an arm of flesh, but with us is the Lord our God.' When ye are thus for God, God will be with you, and then what is dust to the wind, briars and thorns to a devouring burning, an arm of flesh to the Lord our God? All the discouragements of the creature come from these things: want of care to get interest in God. and want of skill to improve it. Your grand design should be to get God with you, and truly then you may slight the most daring attempts: Isa. viii. 9, 10, Associate yourselves, O ye people, and ye shall be broken in pieces; and give ear, all ye of far countries: gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces, gird yourselves and ye shall be broken in pieces: take counsel together and it shall come to nought. Speak the word and it shall not stand, for God is with us.' In a triumph of faith the prophet laugheth at their vain attempts. He challengeth not only single adversaries that might sooner be dissipated, but such as were strengthened by a combination of interests, and twisted into a league and association, but all will not do. Ye shall be broken in pieces.' Again he speaketh to them, Call in more strength, come with advised care, yet ye shall be broken to pieces. If you will adventure once more, and try the other fifty, as that wretched king did, 2 Kings 1, and see if heaven will smile on a third endeavour, yet still the event shall be the same, Ye shall be broken in pieces.' He addeth again, Take counsel together;' that is, recollect yourselves; summon your best wits, that you may know wherein you have failed, and play your game the more wisely the next time; yet,

saith the prophet, it shall come to nought. Your deliberate and mature consultations shall have the same event with your rash and heady enterprises; that is, all shall be disappointed. The prophet goeth on, speak the word, and it shall not stand;' that is, when you have prepared the business, so that you think all the devils in hell cannot disappoint you, yet God can, for he supposeth their presumption grown so confident, as that they speak the word; that is, give out threats and boasts, and yet then it shall not stand. The reason is rendered in the close of all; for Emmanuel, for God is with us. Indeed, there is the ground of all. God never made a creature, or any combination of creatures, that, should be too hard for him; God with us, is enough. You do but spit against the wind when you oppose those with whom he is. The drivel will be returned upon your own face: Isa. liv. 18, Surely they shall gather together, but not by me. Whosoever shall gather together against thee, shall fall for thy sake.' There may be tumults and confusions, but being without God there is little hope, and against God there is certain ruin. The heathens were convinced of this; they would not war against a nation till they had called out their gods from them. Macrobius, in his Saturnalia, hath a chapter, De Ritu Evocandi Deos. It was upon this errand that Balaam went to Balak, to get away the God of Israel, Num. xxiii. Certainly nothing goes so near to the hearts of God's people as the insultations of their adversaries, when they have lost their shadow and the defensive presence of their God; as when David had fallen scandalously in the matter of Uriah, his adversaries boasted, Now there is no help from him in God. Selah,' Ps. iii. 2; and this went to his soul. So still our scandalous miscarriages give the adversaries hope that our shadow is gone, &c.

3. In having God, you have men too; he can preserve friends, or awe enemies; and therefore, still I say, to gain the respects of men, the

best way is to get in with God: Prov. xvi. 7, When a man's ways please the Lord, his enemies shall be at peace with him,' Remember God's power over the spirits of men, and then you will see that your main work lieth with him. Jacob's hardest task was with God; he wrestleth with God, and findeth embraces from Esau. Reconcile yourselves to God, and take hold of his strength, and then he can take away the enmity of the creature. God can recover lost hearts, preserve the respects of subjects entire to the supreme powers. It is very notable that in Gen. xxxiv. 30, compared with Gen. xxxv. 1, when the miscarriages of Simeon and Levi had made Jacob stink among the inhabitants of the land, and he was afraid the Canaanites and Perizzites would combine against him to slay him, God biddeth him go to Bethel and pay his vows. Such disasters should put him in mind of his covenant; the performing of which was the best way to support him against his present fears. Oh! consider, if any have made you stink in the land, your business is to go to Bethel and pay your vows. Force will not be so great a security as godliness. Armies make long work, but God can soon still the rage of the people; and when he doth it, it is done in a more kindly way. The door is more easily opened by a key than an iron bar, and men's hearts sooner gained by the power of God than men. God can clear up your renown, recover your glory and esteem again, calm the people, and cause all to be still. There are two things that are of great difficulty, and they are joined in one verse, Ps. lxv. 7, He stilleth the noise of the seas, and the tumult of the people.' In the accomplishing of either of these things, man is at the greatest loss, either in assuaging the natural or the metaphorical waves; and therefore it was well done of that king who, to disprove his flatterers that had soothed him with the greatness of his command and empire, both by sea and land, caused his chair to be set near the sea-side, and the waves beating upon it without any

reverence, said, Lo! as great a king; as I am, I cannot rebuke one wave. Truly no more can princes of themselves still the tumult of the people, for they are both of an equal difficulty, and must be left to the overruling power of God, the noise of the seas, and the rage of the people.

I come now to apply the point. We have found that getting in with God, by establishing religion, and repairing the decays of godliness, is a special means of preservation.

Oh! then let us consider this with reflection upon ourselves; we are concerned in it. England heretofore was compared to Laodicea for its lukewarmness, [222] it may be compared to Sardis for its languishing. We have a name that we live. Our renown is gone into all lands, for savoury and practical truths; but, alas! our crown is like to be taken from us, and our glory laid in the dust. Religion of late seemeth to have lost all life and spirit, and godliness to degenerate into a cold form. The ordinances that erstwhile were wont to open heaven and break hearts, through the abundance of spirit that was in them, seem now to have lost all their converting power. Visions are open and few gained; Christ is crucified before our eyes, but some fatal enchantment and fascination seemeth to abide upon our congregations, for few hearts are broken, few brought into the obedience of the truth. The English Christians heretofore were famous for their severe innocency, strict walking, constant communion with God, undaunted zeal, sweet experiences, holy conferences and communications, whereas now we meet with few but such as are, like the vain men of Israel, of a light spirit, loose conversation; given to vain wranglings and disputes more than to practice and holy life, and measuring religion not so much by the power of godliness, as by form and faction, and siding with parties. God knoweth how unwilling I am to lay open our own nakedness,

and to declaim against the times to which he hath disposed me. I know the nature of man is querulous and complaining; the unthankful good one will always be commending the former times, and accusing his own; it is often the voice of discontent and peevishness, The former times were better than these,' Eccles. vii. 10. Besides, every trifling zeal vents itself in loose invectives and flings. It is easy to rake in this puddle, and to reproach our times with such crimes and allegations, quae quisque suis temporibus objicit, as Tacitus observed, with which every one upbraideth his own age; therefore I shall endeavour to make out the conviction more particularly for our humiliation and instruction. My method is this:--

First, I will show you wherein godliness is decayed.

Secondly, How it came to pass, what may be the occasions or causes of such a languishing.

Thirdly, What we shall do to repair it; every one in his place, the people in their way, the ministry in theirs, and you in that orb and sphere that is proper to you.

First, My first work is to show that godliness is decayed, and wherein. I shall do that the rather, partly that it may help us to put our mouths in the dust, and to lie low in the sense of our shame this day; partly because we are all apt to call our design godliness, every party like the old Rogatians, ingross it to themselves. For my part, I look upon it as the highest sacrilege and peevishness in the world for men to do so, to measure religion by their private interest and opinion, and as they thrive more or less in the world, so to judge or cry out of the rising or fall of religion. Private conceits do not deserve so glorious a name, and the godly party is of a larger extent than to be appropriated or confined within any one sect and faction. Alas! how often do we mistake self-love for zeal, and out of a blind dotage to

our own opinions, think Christ standeth or falleth with our private misconceits and interests. It was but a presumptuous arrogance in Nestorius, to promise heaven and victory so lavishly to Theodosius the Emperor, if he would do as he suggested. [223] Therefore to prevent all partial claims, and to waive the suspicion of any such drift, I shall first show wherein the power of godliness is found to decay and languish, even unto death; I mean that godliness which is commended to us in the word, and is the glory of our religion and profession. The gasping of it is many ways discovered, but especially by these things.

1. By the languishing of zeal, and the neglect of public duties. Zeal is a grace so rare, that we scarce know the nature and working of it; for, alas! to what a stupidness and cold indifferency in religion are we come. Though God be dishonoured, truth violated, the Sabbath profaned, yet men are neither hot nor cold, Rev. iii. 15. We content ourselves with a lukewarmness and mumbling of profession, middling it between Christ and the world; neither suffering nor doing any further than will suit with our interests, as if in hazardous cases we should look on rather than interpose. Where are those that do eTraja)v%ecr0ai, contend earnestly for the faith of the saints, the glory of God, that mind religion for religion's sake? Jude 3. If we had more love, we would have more zeal; [224] if the heart were gained to religion, we would have more heat and power, and not give up ourselves to such a secure oscitancy. The iniquity of the times should put us forward, not make us worse. A godly man should be like fountain water, hottest in coldest weather. Dead fishes may swim with the stream, and every carnal heart walk according to the trade of Israel. It deserveth no thanks to be earnest in duties, when there is no opposition against them; but, alas! as soon as danger cometh, how are men discouraged! It should not be so. When the wicked prevail, it is said of the godly man: Job xvii.

9, That he shall hold on his way; and he that is righteous grow stronger and stronger.' True grace and true zeal by an antiperistasis is best in the worst times; but it is otherwise with us, for our magistrates, some of them, when the day of God is profaned, his name dishonoured, his truth questioned, are like careless Gallios, troubled with none of these things, do not come forth to the help of Christ. For our ministry, many act no further than they are encouraged, and put on by an outward power, and will not engage till all difficulties be first removed by a secular arm; others leave themselves at a loose liberty and indifferency to comply with all parties, and launch forth no further, than they may get to shore again if a storm arise. Our people are in an unsettled hesitation, ready to draw back upon every trouble, pleading for the stumps of Dagon, and revolting in their hearts to the old ways. And truly as yet the evil days are not fully come, so that this grace is not thoroughly exercised. However, a cold indifferency in such times will in very evil times be a flat apostasy. Certainly this is clear already, that we are much gone off from our first love. At the first breaking out of reformation, what heat and violence was there offered to the kingdom of God! what zeal against the little foxes, every modest appearance of error! what a holy forwardness! whereas now we are at a stand; the old world, like old men, every day losing more of its heat and fervour. Melancthon's prophecy is almost verified; for he, though he were a sober and meek man--and indeed his fault was too much connivance, for, by his silence, consubstantiation prevailed--was so sensible of the decay of zeal in his time, that he feared the world would come to account religion a matter of nothing, or a word-strife, not worthy men's regard and engagement; and truly it is even brought to that pass. [225]

2. By the insipid formality and dead-heartedness that is found

everywhere. We are without life in the ways of God, little beauty of holiness, little circumspection and strictness in life and conversation. Religion is like a river; it loseth in strength what it getteth in breadth. Now many come in to profess, their walkings are not so awful and severe. When it is a shame not to have some form in religion, many have but a form, and so debase the holy profession by mingling it with their pride, lust, and avarice, so that it is not so daunting, and hath no such majesty with it as formerly it had. A truly godly man is to be the world's wonder, the world's reproof, the world's conviction. The world's wonder: 1 Peter iv. 4, They think it strange,' &c. You are to hold forth such mortification and self-denial that the world may wonder. You are to wean yourselves, and bind up your affections from such objects as do so pleasantly and powerfully insinuate with them, and ravish their affections. He should be also the world's reproof: Heb. xi. 7, by building an ark Noah condemned the world. You should be mirrors to kill basilisks; and in the innocency of your lives, show them their own filthiness; in short, your lives should be a real reproof and upbraiding to them. And then the world's conviction: 1 Cor. xiv. 25, you should walk so that they may see God in you of a truth. Your conversation should be nothing else but a walking rule, and religion exemplified. But, alas! how vain, carnal, sensual, are most men, discovering nothing of the power of grace, the beauty of holiness, and the efficacy of the new nature; we may see much of man, but nothing of God in them. It is even our description: 2 Tim. iii. 5, Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.' Denying the power; that is, refusing and resisting that inward virtue and force of godliness, by which the heart should be renewed or the conversation rectified. Possibly there may be more light, but less heat. What Seneca observed of his times is true of ours, Boni esse desierunt, sicubi

docti evaserint--they were less good when they were more learned; for now we rather dispute away duties than practise them. Oh! it is sad this, when knowledge shall devour good life, and notion spoil knowledge. That of Hugo is but too just a character of us, Amant lectionem, non religionem, immo amore lectionis in odium incidunt religionis, multos video studiosos, paucos religiosos, &c. [226] Many desire to know, few to live; yea, knowledge seemeth to make men less strict and holy, for they dispute away religion the more they understand of it.

3. Loathing of heavenly manna. There cannot be a more proper discovery of spiritual languishing. Sick persons loathe their food, and feed upon ashes. Surely godliness is in the wane when a people are Christ-glutted, and gospel-glutted, and are all for ungrounded subtleties, quintessential extracts, and distillations. [227] Oh! how welcome were the first appearances of light. It is a blessing we know by the want of it. When we came newly out of darkness, whose heart did not say within him, chaire, phos, welcome, sweet light? When it was a new thing, how strangely did it affect us? But it is the unhappy fate of the word to be despised upon acquaintance: John xv. 35, Ye rejoiced in his light.' pro`s o'ran, for a season,' some small time, when he first began to shine in their borders, Cant. i. 26. To a gracious eye truth's bed is always green; as fresh and flourishing at the last as at the beginning; but most look upon it with an adulterous eye and heart; love it whilst it is new, nauseate it after some acquaintance and knowledge of it. With what fastidious disdain do men despise sacred truths, if discovered in their own native beauty and simplicity! 1 Cor. ii. 6, We speak wisdom among those that are perfect,' saith the apostle; that is, among grown Christians, who can discern beauty in a plain ordinance. Wisdom in an evangelic simplicity, though there be no

enticing words, sublime speculations, and exotic conceits. But now carnal men are all for ta` ba'the, depths, as they say, Rev. ii. 24; that is, they account them great and deep mysteries, whereas the Spirit of God accounteth them illusions of Satan. Surely God will meet with such a wanton people. The continuator of Sleidan showeth, that before the great massacre in France, the Protestants were for a luscious, wanton kind of preaching. Truly we cannot absolutely determine what will become of us, only we have cause to fear that conscientious sermons, as much despised as they are, may be a commodity dear enough in England ere long; and visions may be less open, that they may be the more precious, 1 Sam. iii. 4.

4. Plain apostasy, and turning round to those things which we hated in others before. As for instance, to Arminian, antisabbatarian doctrines, &c., which heretofore were made the charactistic note to distinguish good persons and bad. I would not be understood as if I did think a thing simply evil because held by such men: opposition of image worship was never the worse because the Monothelites first stirred in it; [228] nor is the cross the more holy because the Messalians despised it; neither is everything evil because taught by persons whom religion maketh justly odious. I only speak now, as supposing other grounds by way of aggravation, and to show how inexcusable it is for us to judge others for the same things which we now do ourselves, Rom. ii. 3. And truly it is observable, that many, when these corruptions were set on by violence, did stubbornly enough bear up against the heat of opposition; whereas now, by erroneous insinuations, their revolt is made facile, so as they may come off from truth with the less shame and regret, and therefore do now allow in themselves those errors which formerly, with so much heat and sharpness, they opposed in others, Deut. xii. 29, 30. You shall see there, of all sins the Jews were to

beware of the way of the heathens, whom God had cast out before them. Hear the words: When the Lord thy God shall cut off the nations from before thee, and thou goest and dwellest in their land, take heed thou be not ensnared by following them, after they be destroyed before thee.' Truly we have the same nature, and having the same possessions, may be easily tempted to the same sins, as pride, looseness, ease, and error, &c. You see that is brought as a great aggravation, 2 Kings xvii. 8, They walked in the way of the heathen, whom the Lord had cast out before them.' These opinions and practices have proved destructive to others, and they will be fatal to us too. Such apostasy is a sin of a double dye, as being against former experience of God's judgments on others, and the former judgment of our own consciences. Why were we so keen against that in them, to which we are now revolted ourselves?

5. By the wounds religion hath received in the house of her friends. Many have acted of late under the name and colour of religion, as if they went on purpose to make godliness odious, and religion stink in. the land, engaging themselves in all unwarrantable practices, odious and gross heresies, prostituting the holy profession to all kinds of impurities and injuries, whereby the mouth of iniquity is opened, the hatred of enemies justified, their reproaches made good, and a great occasion and advantage given to wicked men to speak evil of this way. It was the glory of Christianity heretofore to be hated unjustly, and that only of the worst men, which was an argument of the goodness and purity of it. That which Nero hateth must needs be excellent, [229] and the only fault that could be charged upon the primitive Christians was their Christianity, they were just and honest, good subjects, and good neighbours, saith Pliny the younger; only they had their hymnos antelucanos, their morning meetings to praise their God; and Tertullian saith, the heathens were wont to say, Caius Sejus vir bonus nisi quod

Christianus,--Caius Sejus was a good man, all his fault was that he was a Christian. You see still their profession was their only crime; nay, to come nearer home, the Bishop of Aliffe, in the Council of Trent, confessed that we had orthodoxos mores, but haereticam fidem, a good life, but a bad belief; and truly this was our glory when no evil could be charged upon us but our private opinion and profession. But alas! now it is otherwise;. many of those that profess religion, have done that which a moral heathen would scarce do. Oh! what a dishonour to Christ is this, that those that pretend to him should be less civil, just, discreet, &c.! Oh! how is the holy profession exposed to the shame and reproach of the adversaries! How is Christ crucified and put to shame again in your scandals! How will the Hams of the world laugh to discover this nakedness! Thus it hath been of old. [230] The apostle Peter speaketh of some impure deceivers by whom the way of truth was evil spoken of,' 2 Peter ii. 1. Thus the ancient Christians were loaded with all kinds of scorn and contempt, and hated for the heretics' sake, because of the Gnostics; they were called luminum extinctores, putters out of the candles, and doers of obscene things in the dark. [231] The unclean conversation of the Priscillianists made Pagans detest all Christians, and by the rage of Maximus they fared all alike; malice will know no distinction. Alas! what a sad thing is this, that religion's own friends should betray her; that you that are called Christians should be called so to the disgrace of Jesus Christ, [232] that you should give occasion to them that desire occasion, and make good all their reproaches!

6. By religion's being made the stalking-horse to every self-seeking design. Many hold it forth only out of a desire to advance some private ends, to get preferment and honour in the world, or some opportunity to enrich themselves with the public spoils. And truly this is very sad,

that every malicious, covetous, or ambitious project should be clothed with this glorious pretence. Thus the apostle Peter speaketh of some in his days that abused their profession by making it a cloak of maliciousness,' 1 Peter ii. 6. And Lactantius observeth the same also of many in his time, who wounded the Christian name and honour by using it as a cover to their sinful and corrupt practices. [233] And others show what prejudice was done to religion by the pride, desire of greatness, and contention, that was between the pastors and professors of it; insomuch that Diocletian thought that Christianity was nothing else but a wretched device of wicked men, [234] set afoot out of some private aims. Thus, also, Ignatius speaketh of some that were ou christi'anoi alla` christe'mporoi, not Christians so much as Christ-sellers, [235] like Judas, that followed Christ only to make gain of him. I have brought these instances because they do but give us the description of many in our age, who make God to serve with their sins,' Isa. xliii. 24, and godliness to be only the specious outside of every unclean intent and worldly design. Thus poor religion, that delighteth to breathe in the air of self-denial, is made the usual stale to self-seeking; and godliness, that checketh carnal projects, by a vile submission is forced to serve them.

7. By the want of endeavours to propagate religion, and to diffuse it amongst others. True godliness, where it is powerful, is of a diffusive and spreading nature, like leaven, till it hath pierced the whole lump. Now what have we done in this, either Christians among their neighbours, magistrates in the kingdom, or masters in their families? For private Christians, they spend the heat and strength of their spirits in lesser matters, and let the weightier go; through division and strife, forget edification. Many renounce all care of them without; and whereas they might have strengthened the hands of their brethren

that have acted in a public reformation, what have they done? Have they joined as far as their private principles would give leave? endeavoured to bring the kingdom onward to the way and will of Christ? And then for magistrates, have they been so zealous as they should be to propagate a religious ministry throughout the kingdom, to enlighten dark corners? There is not a better work, nor more for your safety. Austin observed [236] that the Christians tasted the violence of the Goths and Vandals, for that they were not careful to bring off the heathens from their idolatry. Such endeavours would be your defence, and in the business of religion nothing concerneth you more than this; but my chief aim under this head is to speak of the neglect of family duties, which is the great reason why religion is decayed abroad. These are the springs and fountains of the country. Churches were first in families, where the master of the house was the priest, and the beauty and power of religion is still preserved there; and therefore, next to churches, they require a chief care. Oh! how excellent is it when churches are like to heaven, the assembly below like the great congregation above, and families like churches for their religion, order, and comeliness! Heb. xii. 29. You read of a church in Philemon's house, Philem. ver. 1. Melancthon said of George, Prince of Anhalt, Cubiculum ejus templum, academia, curia, [237] that his chamber was a university, a court, and a church; the latter because of the instructions, prayer, and worship that were there. Religion first decayeth in families before in churches; therefore when the order of houses is subverted, duties neglected there, how soon doth godliness decay abroad! I do not know any one thing that God expecteth more from a religious householder--I mean in that capacity and relation than the establishment of religion in his family: Gen. xviii. 19, I know Abraham that he will command his children and his house hold after him to keep the way of the Lord.'

Mark, God reckoneth upon it as a duty that the godly will perform, I know,' &c.; and remember disappointment is the worst vexation.

8. By opposition and snarling at piety and purity, as the purity of reformation. Men are afraid to be too heavenly, and reject government because it would cross their licentiousness; and so the purity that shineth forth in the lives of God's servants. You heard in the morning [238] how apt an English spirit is to hate godliness under some other name, and how men that have but a form are wont to snarl at the power; and indeed the apostle Paul observeth the same thing, 2 Tim. iii. 3, with ver. 5, Having a form of godliness, despisers of those that are good.' These two descriptions are usually coupled. Cain and Abel both sacrificed, only Abel's offering was the better, and therefore Cain maliced him, 1 John iii. 12. Men do not love to be upbraided by others' righteousness; they would fain have their laziness justified by the common defects, i'na en to koi'no to` kat' autou's krupte'tai, as Nazianzen speaketh, [239] they would have none zealous and excelling; therefore those that are contented with a form will hate those that have the power. We can look for no other: Gal. iv. 27, He that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit; even so it is now.' We may also add, And so it is now, and so it will be. Carnal Christians will have some pretence or other to persecute those that are more godly. One great design is, as you heard in the morning, to cry up a name under which this hatred may be carried on the more covertly and secretly; and usually it is taken from the party most discountenanced, or which is most publicly odious, or which hath most dishonoured their profession. Thus when the Priscillianists were generally hated, and indeed they deserved it, other Christians shared in their miseries, Sulpicius Severus speaketh of one Ithacius, a bishop whose hatred against the Priscillianists did so far transport him, that

if any were of good life, studious of the scriptures, he would suspect and blast him as a Priscillianist. I have read of one Sanpaulinus, a French martyr, who, when he reproved one for swearing, was presently suspected of Lutheranism; and Bonner, if any did but mention the name of God with reverence, took it for ground enough to call him Lollard.

And truly it is even thus among us. The world hath gotten some names and pretences under which they carry on their hatred against the power of godliness the more securely and with the less dread, so that it is to be feared that if any be of godly conversation, it will be enough to make him a sectary, and an enemy of the kingdom's peace and quiet. When the name is once gotten up, mischief and malice, as I said, will make no distinction.

9. The late great increase of scandalous sins. Times of trouble are usually licentious, and when penal laws are suspended by force, wickedness groweth impudent; and truly it is even so among us, to the confronting of authority; whoring, and swearing, and drunkenness and Sabbath profanations abounding everywhere; yea, more than formerly. We looked for purging the land, and it is more defiled. When the pot boileth, the scum is discovered. Baths bring forth corruption, if it be in the body, into the skin. God hath been reforming the land, and our wickedness appeareth the more: Hosea vii. 1, When I would have healed Israel, then the iniquity of Ephraim was discovered, and the wickedness of Samaria.' God hath been correcting and amending us, and we have been the more vile and sinful. Oh! then how may the kingdom sit down like the church in Micah, and mourn: Micah vii. 1, 2, I am as when they have gathered the summer fruits, as the grape gleanings of the vintage. The good man is perished out of the earth. There is none upright upon the earth. They all lie in wait for blood, and hunt every man his brother by a net,' Zeal is decayed, the power of godliness gone, the word

despised, and we are even grown as the people whom God hath cast out before us. Religion hath received wounds in the house of her friends, and is made a pretence to every base design. Few seek to propagate it, and it meets with much snarling and opposition everywhere, and iniquity is now grown impudent.

And thus I have done with my first work, which was to show wherein religion is decayed.

Secondly, My next business is to show you the occasions and causes, how we came thus to languish and decrease, that so the guilt may lie at the right door. And truly we need not contend about that, but may every one of us smite upon the thigh, and bear the shame of our own iniquity.

Briefly then--

1. For the occasions; the knowledge of them may serve to shame us with our unthankfulness. They are two:--

[1.] One is the late prosperity which God of his mercy had given to his people. The church, which is the heir of the cross, [240] is seldom able to manage and wield an outward happy condition. I remember, Nazianzen observeth, [241] that it hath ever with more honour endured misery than with safety improved happiness and success; that maketh us always degenerate or divide: sometimes degenerate. When Constantine favoured religion, poison was sown in the church; Christians began to lose their ancient severity, and to look after ease and honours and pleasures in the world. When we have anything in the world, we neglect our high hopes; and so by little and little holiness decayeth and degenerateth into a mere pretence, which is only retained the better to colour over some carnal pursuits and projects; whereas those Christians that meet with nothing but hard things in the world and from the world are more heavenly and holy; for the inward exercises of mortification are much advantaged by their outward condition, and the world being

crucified to them, they are the better crucified to the world, as Paul speaketh, Gal. vi. 14, i.e., it neither smileth upon them nor they upon it. And as success maketh us to degenerate, so to divide, rosthe'ntes dielu'samen, [242] as he said, as soon as the church grew prosperous it grew factious; like timber in the sunshine, we are apt to warp and divide from one another, or like elephants returning from the heat of the battle, we tread down our own troops. [243] Prosperity begets wantonness, and wantonness novelties, and so the people of God come to be scattered, and to go into distinct herds and divisions, an evil ever fatal to religion, and yet it seemeth connatural. The apostles themselves, though oracles infallible, could not wholly prevent it in their days; outward prosperity then was a great occasion.

[2.] Another may be openness of vision. Carnal hearts are soon cloyed. I cannot tell how it cometh to pass, but so it is; the word hath less power when openly preached. A gospel-glutted stomach doth often force God to provide sharp remedies, either some great outward misery, accompanied with the want and famine of the word, and then any little thing is precious, as see two places: one is Zech. vii. 7, Ye should have hearkened to the former prophets, when Jerusalem was inhabited and in prosperity, and the cities thereof round about her, and men inhabited the south of the plain.' Mark, there is their full condition described; the temple stood, the city flourished, the suburbs were great; but then they hearkened not, but despised the former prophets, that is, the prophets that prophesied before the captivity. But now look upon them in their emptiness: the other place for that is Ezra ix. 8, And now that the Lord hath showed us such grace, to give us a nail in the holy place,' &c. Mark how welcome every little thing is to them then; a nail in the holy place is such a mercy; that is, to see one pin or nail driven into the rafters of the temple; whereas before they

would not know their own mercies, while that stately edifice stood in all its glory and beauty. Times may come when these dews will be precious, and sermon showers sweet to thirsty souls; or if this be not, God may send a dark Ezekiel, when a plain Jeremiah is despised. Ordinances may be carried in such an obscure, notional, airy way as to yield no efficacy and comfort. These are the occasions, but--

2. What are the causes of the languishing and decay of godliness? I answer:--

[1.] That great division and dissentiency that is among God's own people. When the language was divided, the building ceased; when religion is controverted, it loseth its awe and force. It is observable that, Acts iv. 32, 33, when the people were of one heart and of one mind, then with great power gave the apostles witness to the resurrection of Jesus Christ,' Mark that, with power; the word came with command and authority upon the hearts of men. The world easily stumbleth at this rock of offence; the assent is more loose and doubtful when things are committed to the uncertainty of disputes, and so doth not commandingly check vicious inclinations. When the ways of flesh and blood are backed with wit and parts, and made to seem a valuable opinion, men are hardly gained.

Besides, godly men themselves, while they engage with too much heat and zeal in their particular opinions, grow cool in piety and practical duties, the strength of their spirits being diverted and carried out so disproportionably to the lesser matters. God placed the flaming sword about paradise, and the gospel calleth for violence in the matters of the kingdom, Mat. xi. 12. But we usually mistake our object, and misplace our zeal upon such matters as have more of interest in them than godliness, and are rather busied in disputing much, than doing much.

[2.] The embasing and emasculating the ordinance of preaching. Hunger seeketh food, but lust dainties and quails. When preachers provide for men's lusts rather than their consciences, religion is embased and loseth power. A ministry that stayeth in the paint of words will beget but painted grace. When we come in the demonstration of the Spirit, we come in power, 1 Cor. ii. 6, en apodei'xei, with plain and solid conviction; this is the sin, this the curse and misery. When the thread of the gospel is so fine spun, it will not clothe a naked soul; notion eateth out all saving knowledge. The apostle speaks of a pseudo'numos gnosis, 1 Tim. vi. 20, Oppositions of science falsely so called,' by which they thought to better the gospel, but did indeed debase it. Such niceties enervate godliness, make it weak and less in power. We must take heed then of debasing this ordinance to an effeminate delicacy. It should still be masculine and generous, full of spirit and power from on high. I would not be mistaken, as if I did plead for a lazy carelessness in managing the word. I know that God concurreth with man's diligence; and if we would not have the people loathe the word, we should painfully provide it for them. Every scribe that is instructed for the kingdom of God, that is, that would do service in the church of God, must bring forth out of his treasuries things both new and old,' Mat. xiii. 52, that is, although not new truths, yet koina' kai'nos, old truths in a new way, otherwise represented to the imagination or fancy, to take off that tedium or natural satiety that is in us, that we may not loathe them as coleworts twice sod, but that truths may still have a fresh look upon the conscience and affections. This may be done, but we must take heed of ungrounded niceties, subtle notions, that beget only speculation, and do not stir up to practice.
[3.] An undue preaching of the gospel. Poison conveyed in so sweet a wine maketh the cup the more deadly. By this means religion itself is

made to be of sin's side, and the grace of God pliable to carnal conclusions; and indeed, when the truths of God, that should convince of sin, are debauched to so vile a purpose as to countenance sin, men can the better overcome remorse of conscience, and do sin with the less regret, out of a presumption that the gospel is of their side, Jude, ver. 3, They turn the grace of our God into wantonness;' they debauch the grace of God, that is, the doctrine of grace, make that yield countenance to their lusts; and so men father their bastards upon the Spirit, and sin cum privilegio, by a license from heaven. When those that should have been prophets cried, Peace, peace! see what Jeremiah saith, chap. iv. 10, Ah! Lord God, surely thou hast greatly deceived this people,' in saying they shall have peace. It was done in God's name by the false prophets, and they were as secure as if God himself had said so. We would willingly have the gospel over-gospelled, and hear in the ear of liberty; therefore I am persuaded there is no one thing hath hindered the power of godliness, care of duty, humbling of souls, so much as this undue preaching of the gospel.

[4.] Public liberty and connivance, that maketh sin more common, and so less odious. Outward restraints keep men that are evil from discovering of it: and though it be the privilege of divine precepts to convert the soul, Ps. xix. 7, yet the commands and authority of men may much hinder the diffusion and dissemination of sin and error. It is good to observe the several guards that God hath put upon a man to keep him from sin, so prone are we to it. There are inward guards Spirit, word, and conscience; there are outward guards--the ministry, the church, and the magistrate--all which are as in his stead to be an awe to sinners; more especially it is said of the magistrate that he is the minister of God, to be a terror to evil-doers.' Rom. xiii. 3, 4. Now, when their sword is sheathed up, and nothing is settled, wicked men lose all awe and

restraint, and do what is right in their own eyes,' Judges xxi. 25, as it is said there they did when there was no king of Israel; that is, no exercise of government to restrain public disorders, for as yet their government was not monarchical; then all goeth to wreck, iniquity groweth impudent, and religion is borne down. Solomon saith, Prov. xx. 8, A king that sitteth upon the throne of judgment scattereth away all evil with his eyes;' that is, when magistrates employ and draw out their power, they scatter evil as the sun scattereth mists.

[5.] Another cause may be want of catechising, by which means truths would be more revived, and kept fresh and savoury in the thoughts, and so have the more awe upon us. Martyrology and catechising were two of the most successful engines against Popery. Truths work most when we discern that cognation and kin, by which they touch and respect one another; indistinct knowledge doth but dispose to error or looseness. Sermon hints, a hint here, and a hint there, doth not so much good, for men of weaker conceits cannot so easily discern how one truth is inferred from another, and what analogy and proportion there is between them, and so are easily overcome by more subtle and stronger wits; or else, not discerning that fair compliance that is between practical and comfortable truths, grow loose. Certainly religion would be more propagated if this exercise were revived. We are debtors to wise and unwise, Rom. i. 14; and Christ, that bade Peter feed pro'bata, his sheep, bade him also feed arni'a, his lambs, John xxi. 15, 16. For want of this pattern of sound words, and these condescensions to weak ones by this exercise, many mischiefs have abounded amongst us, to the great damage of religion and godliness.

These are part of the causes; others might be mentioned, but I shall forbear. You will say then, What remedy? Therefore I shall proceed to the next thing, which is to show you:--

Thirdly, What we should do to strengthen the things that are ready to die,' or to repair decayed godliness. Give me leave to speak a word:--

First, To all in general, as we are Christians. Several things are necessary. Let me point at a few.

1. Oh! that we would all join together, quasi manu factâ--it is Tertullian's word--in a holy conspiracy to besiege heaven by prayers, until more spirit and life be poured out, and in greater abundance. God hath said that he will pour out his Spirit upon all flesh," Acts ii. 15. Oh! beg it for England; go to him that hath the seven Spirits, to look upon another dead Sardis. God must offer violence to us ere we can offer violence to the kingdom. It is the mighty quickening Spirit, that must revive us in our languishings. That which carrieth the soul to God, must come from God. Waters can arise no higher than their spring. Religion is like the pure vestal flame, which, if it went out, was to be kindled only by a sunbeam. Oh! then let us go and wait before God for those seven Spirits, those mighty and quickening operations. The Spirit came upon Christ in the appearance of a clove, to show his meekness; but upon the apostles in cloven tongues of fire, to show the might and force that is in his operations.

2. Let us study how we may more honour and adorn religion by a godly and peaceable walking before God and men. Every Christian should be the gospel's ornament, as a hypocrite is the gospel's disgrace: Titus ii. 10, Adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour.' Let the world know there is more in religion than pretence and policy. While hypocrites and such as seek themselves betray the honour of religion, do you advance it; let them see there are true stars as well glaring meteors. Your lives should make God glorious: 1 Peter ii. 9, hold forth the praises, ta`s areta`s, of him that hath called you; let them read God in you of a truth, and be not distinguished so much by a party and profession as by

holiness. Tertullian saith of the ancient Christians, Non aliunde noscibiles quam de emendatione vitiorum--their distinction was their innocency. When divers libertines had dishonoured religion, and walked unworthily in their relations, Peter pressed the true Christians to good conscience and more honest walking, 1 Peter ii. 12, and iii. 16; indeed, both those chapters are to this purpose. This will be a real confutation, and then God will give you praise in the land of your shame, Zeph. iii. 19. Hair cut will grow again if the roots remain; and though the razor of censure hath brought baldness and reproach upon the head of religion, yet its good name will grow and flourish again, and they will be ashamed that falsely accuse your godly conversation. O brethren! at such times we should walk with more care. It is a smart question that, Neh. v. 9, Ought ye not to walk in the fear of our God, because of the reproach of the heathen our adversaries?' When your lives are thus sleek and innocent, this dirt will not stick.

3. Stir up yourselves, and provoke one another to more forwardness in dead times. We should strive who should be first, and exceed in godliness. You know that noted place, Heb. x. 24, Let us consider one another, to provoke unto love and good works.' This is agathe` e'ris, an holy contention, when we contend who shall be most forward in the matters of God. We often provoke one another to carnal strife, to excess in vanity. Oh! when do we sharpen and whet each other's graces? The sons of the coal, how do they enkindle one another, and strengthen each other's hands in wickedness. See how the idolaters are described: Isa. xli. 6, 7, They helped every one his neighbour; every one said to his brother, Be of good courage. So the carpenter encouraged the goldsmith, and he that smootheth with the hammer, him that smiteth on the anvil,' &c. The prophet speaketh of the time when the gospel was sent to the isles, ver. 1; that is, to the European countries, which

are usually expressed by isles in Isaiah. Now, as soon as they listened to this doctrine, down went the pictures and images, but there being some hope offered of their re-erection, they came and strengthened one another's hands: Be of good courage.' They hoped to bring up their craft and way again with pomp and triumph. Oh! when they strengthen one another, will not you? Nazianzen was wont to call the enemies of the church koinou`s diallakta`s, [244] the common reconcilers, because when they unite and support one another against the church, it doth but invite the people of God to a more close union, and free communion with one another. This would be an excellent way to prevent the decays of love and piety.

4. Delight in and wait upon the powerful ministry of the word: The prophets prophesy lies, and the people love to have it so,' Jer. v. 31. A vain people do but encourage a vain ministry. Do not delight, then, in a glozing dispensation, it will be successless. Frothy speculations, moral strains, do no good; the people begin to grow weary of savoury and sound knowledge: the testimony of the witnesses was a torment to the dwellers on the earth, Rev. xi. 10; powerful preaching is their burden. The lazy world would fain lie upon the bed of ease, draw the curtains and rest, and therefore light is trouble some; men begin to thirst and pant for the old unsavoury moral strains, which remain in wary generals, and do not irritate. The Lord may give you your desire; but remember that is a carnal itch that must be clawed, and the times will be sad when men cannot endure sound doctrine, 2 Tim. iv. 3.

I have done with my address to the people.

Secondly, I shall speak a word to the ministry. I am the worst of a thousand to direct others, only I shall take the liberty, in all humility, to suggest my thoughts. Much may be done by you to the repairing of decayed godliness.

1. Christ must still be preached. That is the main truth that keepeth in the life of Christianity. The more evangelical dispensations are, the more powerful; our beloved must still be kept as a bundle of myrrh next our hearts, Cant. i. 13, still fresh and fragrant in the thoughts; all the comfort and support of a Christian dependeth upon that; this is the very spirit and flower of any ministry; and therefore it is said, Rev. xix. 10, The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.' It is not only the beauty, but the life of any dispensation. I know many think this needless, for, as I said before, the indistinct and undue preaching of Christ is the cause of all the looseness and vanity into which religion is degenerated. Ay! but I add here, that this dispensation is still needful. The foolish world is apt to fly into extremes; some are all for doctrines of Christ, others will hear nothing of him, because these sweet truths have been so much misapplied. Popery got up by this pretence; they would not open that gap of free grace to the people. Paul would preach the righteousness of Christ though many did abuse it: Rom. iii. 8, Some slanderously report that we say, Let us do evil that good may come thereof; whose damnation is just.' The meaning is, some gave out that Paul taught that they might sin freely, that God might have the more glory in pardoning; which is expressed there by doing evil that good may come of it. Now, saith the apostle, their damnation is just, that is, if they undo themselves with such a vile conceit, they may thank themselves; they never learned it from me. If poison be sucked out of the flower, thank the spider; and if precious liquor be soured, it is because of the uncleanness of the vessel. Musculus in one of his books had said, that no places were so profane and irreligious as those where the gospel had been preached, or words to that effect. And Contzen, a Jesuit, crieth out upon this, hi sunt evangelici doctores--see the fruit of

Protestantism and gospel-preaching. [245] Many are of his spirit, malign and slander a gospel dispensation. Alas! we are not in the place of God, to prevent misapprehensions; it is our duty to keep this truth fresh in the thoughts, to offer it as a bundle of myrrh to the spouse's bosom.

2. Humbling doctrines must be duly pressed. John the Baptist levelled mountains, and in his days much violence was offered to the kingdom, Mat. xi. 12; and indeed, still John must go before Jesus, like the day-star before the sun. Moses led the people in the wilderness, before Joshua led them into the land of Canaan. We must awaken first by a sense of wrath, or else they will not care for a sight of mercy. The people did not desire a mediator till they heard the thundering, Exod. xx. 18, 19; and it is God's usual method to suffer us to be dead to one law, ere we are alive to another, Gal. ii. 19; first to make us understand the severe obligation that is upon us by the covenant of works, ere we are brought into a better hope by Jesus Christ. God is never truly exalted in the soul till man be humbled; Dagon must fall and be broken if the ark be set up. The Lord diggeth deep when he meaneth to raise the building high, and when he will bring off the soul to Christ powerfully, he bringeth them out of themselves by godly sorrow. This is the drift and scope of the whole scriptures, and therefore I use the less of argument in this matter.

3. Among other parts of godliness, it seemeth to be most necessary now to press the duties of relations. I say, to press Christians to carry themselves holily in their civil relations. No way provideth for the discharge of the duties of relations so much as Christianity or religion; and none have failed in them so much as religious persons of late, so that a great deal of dishonour hath come to God, and a great deal of prejudice to religion, by our unworthy walking in our civil

relations. The gospel or law of Christ requireth that these civil respects which we owe to men should be discharged as in and to the Lord, and that we should turn duties of the second table into duties of the first; that is, perform civil respects upon a religious ground, so that it hath been the glory and honour of religion heretofore to yield the best children, the best subjects, the best kings, the best husbands and wives in the world. Therefore Augustine maketh a challenge to all the world, dent exercitum talem qualem doctrina Cliristi milites esse jussit, [246] --let all the world, saith he, yield such children, such subjects, such soldiers, such servants, such an army, such provincials, judges, kings; such faithful ones, when they have been intrusted with the public monies. But alas! the case is quite otherwise. Of late, none worse than they, none more apt to dishonour God in relations, to disturb civil peace, to resist magistracy upon every dissatisfaction, and to make every discontent the ground of commotion and disobedience. Therefore to teach men to improve their relations for the glory of God and good of religion must needs be seasonable, that, if it be possible, we may repair that incomparable loss which religion hath sustained this way.

4. Learn that holy art of compounding peace with purity, that neither may lose its due respect, that we may neither hazard religion by silence nor eager contention. Holiness and peace are daughters of the same Spirit, and may be reconciled. You find them often coupled in scripture: James iii. 17, The wisdom that is from above is first pure, and then peaceable.' Purity must have the precedence in. your endeavours, but peaceableness must not altogether be shut out. So Mark ix. 30. Have salt in yourselves and peace one with another.' Salt and peace; be savoury, but not too tart and austere. I will not direct my brethren, I do only suggest it.

Thirdly, One word now to the magistrate, and I have done. Oh! consider, this matter appertaineth to you, to strengthen things that are ready to die,' to repair decayed godliness; this challengeth a chief care; yea, the first place in your debates, as in the commandments spiritual duties have the precedency of moral. In the name of Christ, then, let me beseech you:--

1. To be holy and godly in your own persons. Oh! how sad will it be for your souls in the day of the Lord, if you should be employed in the reformation of others, and not be reformed yourselves; that you should be like Noah's shipwrights, that frame an ark for others, and perish in the waters yourselves; or like the Jews, that directed the wise men to Bethlehem, but went not themselves thither to worship Christ. Oh! consider, you are the first sheets of the kingdom; others are printed after your copy. If the first sheet be well set, a thousand more are stamped with ease. See then that the power of religion prevail over your own souls, that, after you have done good to others, you may not be cast away. How can men think that you are sincere in establishing of religion, if it hath made no impression on your own hearts? Scandalous ministers and wicked magistrates do but pull down with one hand what they set up with the other.

2. If you would repair religion, and promote godliness, give encouragement to a godly ministry. You see, when Christ writeth to the church to repair godliness, he directeth it to the angel. Oh! let there be an angel in every church. Christ's strength lieth in his mouth, Isa. xlix. 2; that is the sword by which he overcometh the world. It is the weapon he useth against Antichrist, the spirit of his mouth, 2 Thes. ii. 11. As Gideon overcame the Midianites by lamps and pitchers, so doth Christ by lamps and pitchers; and therefore the apostle calleth it light, or treasure, in an earthen vessel. Oh! then maintain the lamps,

that they may be a means in the hand of God of maintaining godliness in the kingdom. Let there be, as I said, an angel in every church, a light in every socket, a star in every orb. If you look abroad you will find many continued through favour and mediation of friends, qui nihil habent in vita angelicum, aut in doctrina evangelicum, [247] that have nothing angelical in their life, or evangelical in their doctrine.

3. Heartily establish a holy government in the church. Order and discipline is the fence of religion, and a church well-governed is terrible as an army with banners,' Cant. vi. 4; that is, full of beauty and strength. Armies ordered are comely and in a capacity to fight. The present decays are by confusion. It is said, Ps. lxviii. 35, Thou art terrible out of thy holy places.' In the order and beauty of the church, God is most terrible. When worship is pure and regular, it impresseth a dread and a reverence upon men.

4. Countenance godly persons. They are a kingdom's best security, Zech. xii. 5;' And the governors of Judah shall say in their hearts, The inhabitants of Jerusalem are my strength in the Lord of hosts, their God.' Mark, you should call them your strength; they engage a blessing. When Lot was in Sodom, Sodom was in lot. This is one of your chief duties, to see that godliness live peaceably. We are bound to pray for you upon this ground: Pray for them that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty,' 1 Tim. ii. 4. Oh! look to it, then, that religion may have a quiet abode, or else you will not.

5. Honour and sweeten religion by some release of the people's burdens. Belly arguments do work much upon them: Jer. xliv. 17, We will burn incense to the queen of heaven, for then we had plenty of victuals, and were well, and saw no evil.' They measure religion by their outward concernments, and judge of ways by their burdens and troubles. The

oppression of some Protestant princes in Germany was a scandal to the Reformation. Nothing stirreth up vulgar hatred and introduceth violent changes so much as this. The people are like the reed of Egypt; if we lean too hard, they do not support, but pierce; and oppression is like an iron in the fire, it will burn their fingers that hold it. I confess this is somewhat out of my way, therefore I was the more loath to speak in it; but it being for religion's sake, I hope you will pardon a humble motion.

I shall but hint two motives to set on all, and conclude.

1. Is that in the 3d verse of this chapter: Lest I come as a thief.' Oh! consider Christ may steal upon you. When he taketh off his restraint from a people, and they break out into tumults, it is a shrewd sign. You know what faction was ruined by tumults; it is an unhappy presage.

2. The next is taken from the 4th verse: Thou hast a few names that have not defiled their garments.' God taketh notice of those few names that are zealous for him in dead times, that mind the advancement of piety whilst others debase it; they shall walk with me in white.' Either God will provide an ark of safety for you for the present, or give you heaven, which shall make amends for all.

[212] Observatum sapius a Wendilino in lib. de Coelo.

[213] Lactantius quasi quidaui fluvius Tullianae eloquentiae, utinam tam nostra potuisset confirmare quam facile aliena destruxit.'--Hieron.

[214] Tullius lib. de Nat. Deorum.

[215] Quot verba, tot sacramenta.'--Hieron. in Praef. ad Bib.

[216] Foxius in Rom., pag. xxi. 14.

[217] See Aug. de Civit. Dei, lib. xi., cap. 14.

[218] See Mr Jesop's Sermon on the Angel of the Church of Ephesus, p. 12.

[219] Brightman in Cant.

[220] Restaurantes zelum ardoremque pietatis, quae in vobis effrixit, et paene jam extincta est.'--Jac. Rex in Apoc.

[221] Metuendum erit ne qui magistratu connivente res novas in ecclesia moliri coeperint, eodem etiam repugnante, cum occasio ferat, idem quoque in republica moliantur.'--Theol. Mag. Brit, sub fine, Sent. de 5 Art. in Hist. Syn. Dor.

[222] See Brightman in Apoc., cap. iii.

[223] Disperde mecum haereticos et ego tecum disperdam Perses,' &c.

[224] Non amat qui non zelat.'--Aug. contra Adimani, cap. xiii.

[225] Metuendum est in postrema mundi aetate magis hunc errorem grassaturum esse, quod aut nihil sint religiones aut differant tantum vocabulis.'--Melanc. Postil. de Bapt. Christi.

[226] Hugo Miscel. lib. ii. cap. 52.

[227] See Shepherd's Sound Believer, p, 250.

[228] See Paulus Diaconus.

[229] Vide Tertull. in Apol.--Tali dedicatore damnatienis nostrae gloriamur, qui enim Neronem scit intelligere potest non nisi grande bonum a Nerone damnari.' Vide Notas Francis. Zephyri ibidem.--Divina providentia effectum ut Christiana religio eos haberet hostes, qui aliis virtutibus infensi,' &c.

[230] Komodi'a ga`r tois echthrois e eme` tragodi'a, dia` touto ton ekklesion ophei'lomen ouk oligo`n kai` te ske'ne prosethe'kamen.'--Naz. Orat. 14.

[231] Tertul. in Apol.

[232] Dicimur Christiani in opprobrium Christi.'

[233] Nunc male audiunt castiganturque philosophi nostrae sectae quam tuemur, quod aliter quam sapientibus convenit vivant, et vitia sub obtentu nominis celent.' Lact. lib. de Opificio Dei, sub initio.

[234] Euseb. lib. viii. 1.

[235] Ignat. Epist. ad Trall.

[236] Aug. lib. ix. de Civitate Dei.

[237] Melanct. in Praefat. 5 tom. Oper. Lutheri.

[238] From Mr Richard Vines of the Assembly.

[239] Nazian. Orat. in Med.

[240] Ecclesia haeres crucis.'

[241] Raon e'sti duspragi'an e` eupragia'n diaso'sasthai.'--Nazian. Orat. 3 de Pace.

[242] Naz. ibidem.

[243] Quam reportassent tandem coronam si perstitissent in eadem militia, nec ut efferati elephantes ab hostibus conversi contrivissent suos.'--Brightman. de Luthero et Melancthone.

[244] Humin de` ti touto tois koinois emon diallaktais, diallaktai` ga`r este, kai` akousi'os touto chari'zesie.'--Naz. Orat. 13.

[245] Adam Contzen in Mat. xxiv. 5.

[246] Dent exercitum talem qualem doctrina Christi milites esse jussit, tales provinciales, tales parentes, tales dominos, tales filios, tales servos, tales reges, tales judices, tales denique debitorum redditores, et exactores ipsius fisci,' &c.--Aug. ad Marcel. ep. 5.

[247] Brightman in loc.

Chapter 31

HOW MAY WE CURE DISTRACTIONS

IN HOLY DUTIES?

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Ye hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.--Mat. XV. 7, 8.

IN this chapter you will find a contest between Christ and the Pharisees, about their traditions and old customs, which they valued above the commandments of God; as it is usual with formal men to love chains of their own making, and to make conscience of a tradition, when yet they can dispense with a commandment; and thereby discovering themselves to be very hypocrites, who are more in externals than in internals, in show than substance, minding the formality rather than the spirit and life of service to God. Our Lord confirms his censure by the testimony of the prophet Isaiah, Ye hypocrites,' &c.

I shall not stand explaining the words. Drawing nigh is a phrase peculiar to worship, especially to invocation. Mouth and lips are put for all external gestures, and that bodily exercise which is necessary to the worship of God, especially for words. But their heart is far from me; it chiefly intendeth their habitual averseness from God, but may also comprise the wandering and roving of the mind in duty, which is a degree and spice of it: of that I shall treat at this time, and my note will be:--

That distraction of thoughts, or the removing of the heart from God in worship, is a great sin, and degree of hypocrisy.

The text speaketh of gross hypocrisy, or a zealous pretence of outward

worship without any serious bent of heart towards God; but any removal of the heart from him in times necessary to think of him is a degree of it; for though distractions in worship are incident to the people of God, yet they are culpable, and do so far argue the relics of hypocrisy in them. I shall show:--

1. The greatness of the sin.

2. The causes.

3. The remedies.

First, That there is such a sin, sad experience witnesseth; vain thoughts intrude importunately upon the soul in every duty; in hearing the word we are not free (Ezek. xxxiii. 31), nor in singing; but chiefly they haunt us in prayer, and of all kinds of prayer, in mental prayer, when our addresses to God are managed by thoughts alone; there we are more easily disturbed. Words bound the thoughts, and the inconvenience of an interruption is more sensible, as occasioning a pause in our speech; and as in mental prayer, so when we join with others, to keep time and pace with the words, unless the Lord quicken them to an extraordinary liveliness, we find it very hard; but how great a sin this is, is my first task to show. I shall do it:--

1. By three general considerations.

2. By speaking particularly to the present case.

First, Generally.

1. Consider how tender God is of his worship: Lev. x. 3, he hath said that he will be sanctified in all that draw nigh unto him.' To sanctify is to set apart from common use. Now, God will be sanctified, that is, not treated with as an ordinary person, but with special needfulness of soul and affection, becoming so great a majesty; when you think to put him off with anything, you lessen his excellency and greatness, and do not sanctify him, or glorify him as God, and therefore God pleadeth his

majesty when they would put a sorry sacrifice upon him, as if everything were good enough for him: Mal. i. 14, Cursed be the deceiver which hath in his flock a male, and voweth and sacrificeth to the Lord a corrupt thing: for I am a great king, saith the Lord of hosts.' To be slight in his service, argueth mean thoughts of God: Eccles. v. 2, Be not rash with thy mouth, nor hasty to utter anything before God, for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth.' We forget our distance, and by a bold profaneness are too fellow-like and familiar with God, when we are not deeply serious and exact in what we do and say in his presence, but only babble over a few impertinent words without attention and affection. Certainly, God is very sensible of the wrong and contempt we put upon him, for he noteth all: Heb. iv. 13, All things are naked and open to him with whom we have to do.' And he will not put it up, for he telleth us, Exod. xx. 7, that he will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain;' and he will be as good as his word; for the least disorders in worship have been sorely punished; witness the stroke from heaven upon Aaron's sons, Lev. x. 2; the breach made upon Uzzah, 2 Sam. vi. 6; and the havoc made of the Bethshemites, 1 Sam. vi. 19.; the diseases that raged at Corinth, 1 Cor. xi. 30. And though judgments be not so rife and visible now upon our unhallowed approaches to God, yet he smiteth us with deadness, where he doth not smite us with death; for a man is punished otherwise than a boy, and judgments are now spiritual, which in the infancy of the church were temporal and bodily. Certainly, we have all cause to tremble when we come before the Lord.

2. The more sincere any one is, the more he maketh conscience of his thoughts, is more observant of them, and more troubled about them: Isa. lv. 7, Let the unrighteous man forsake his thoughts;' then he beginneth to be serious, and to have a conscience indeed, when his thoughts

trouble him. So David: Ps. cxix. 113, I hate vain thoughts: but thy law do I love.' We think thoughts are free, and subject to no tribunal; if there be any error in them, we think it is a very venial one; they betray us to no shame in the world, and therefore we let them go without dislike and remorse. But a child of God cannot pass over the matter so: he knoweth that thoughts are the immediate births of the soul, and do much discover the temper of it; that there actions begin, and if vain thoughts be suffered to lodge in him, he will soon fall into further mischief, and therefore he considereth what he thinketh, as well as what he speaketh and doeth; and if at all times, especially in worship, where the workings of the inward man are of chief regard, and the acts of the outward only required, as a help to our serving God in the spirit,' Phil. iii. 3.

3. Carelessness in duties is the high way to atheism; for every formal and slight prayer doth harden the heart, and make way for contempt of God; men that have made bold with God in duty, and it succeeds well with them, their awe of God is lessened, and the lively sense of his glory and majesty abated, till it be quite lost; by degrees they outgrow all feelings and tenderness of conscience; every time you come to God slightly, you lose ground by coming, till at length you look upon worship as a mere custom, or something done for fashion's sake.

Secondly, Particularly:--1. It is an affront to God, and a kind of mockery. We wrong his omnisciency, as if he saw not the heart, and could not tell man his thought. It is God's essential glory in worship to be acknowledged an all-seeing spirit, and accordingly to be worshipped in spirit and in truth,' John iv. 24. Thoughts are as audible with him as words; therefore when you prattle words, and do not make conscience of thoughts, you do not worship him as a spirit. We wrong his majesty when we speak to him in prayer, and do not give heed

to what we say. Surely we are not to prattle, like jays, or parrots, words without affection and feeling, or to chatter like cranes,' or be like Ephraim, whom the prophet calls a silly dove without an heart.' A mean man taketh it ill when you have business to talk with him about, and your minds are elsewhere; you would all judge it to be an affront to the majesty of God if a man should send his clothes stuffed with straw, or a puppet dressed up in stead of himself, into the assemblies of God's people, and think this should supply his personal presence; yet our clothes stuffed with straw, or an image dressed up instead of us, such as Michal put into David's bed, 1 Sam. xix. 12, 13, would be less offensive to God than our bodies without our souls; the absence of the spirit is the absence of the more noble part. We pretend to speak to God, and do not hear ourselves, nor can give any account of what we pray for; or rather let me give you Chrysostom's comparison: a man would have been thought to have profaned the mysteries of the Levitical worship, if instead of sweet incense he should have put into the censer sulphur or brimstone, or mingled the one with the other. [248] Surely our prayers should be set forth as incense,' Ps. cxli. 2. And do not we affront God to his face, that mingle so many vain, sinful, proud, filthy, blasphemous thoughts? What is this but to mingle sulphur with our incense? Again, when God speaketh to us, and knocks at the heart, and there is none within to hear him, is it not an affront to his majesty? Put it in a temporal case. If a great person should talk to us, and we should neglect him, and entertain ourselves with his servants, he would take it as a despite and contempt done to him. The great God of heaven and earth doth often call you together to speak to you; now if you think so slightly of his speeches as not to attend, but set your minds adrift to be carried hither and thither with every wave, where is that reverence you owe to him?

It is a wrong to his goodness, and the comforts of his holy presence; for in effect you say that you do not find that sweetness in God which you expect, and therefore are weary of his company before your business be over with him. It is said of the Israelites, when they were going for Canaan, that in their hearts they turned back again into Egypt,' Acts vii. 39. They had more mind to be in Egypt than under Moses' government; and their thoughts ever ran upon the flesh-pots and belly-cheer they enjoyed there. We are offended with their impatience and murmurings, and the affronts they put upon their guides; and do not we even the same and worse in our careless manner of worshipping? When God hath brought us into his presence, we do in effect say, Give us the world again; this is better entertainment for our thoughts than God and holy things. If Christians would but interpret their actions, they would be ashamed of them; is anything more worthy to be thought of than God? The Israelites' hearts were upon Egypt in the wilderness, and our hearts are upon the world, nay, every toy, even when we are at the throne of grace, and conversing with him who is the centre of our rest, and the fountain of our blessedness.

2. It grieveth the Spirit of God: he is grieved with our vain thoughts as well as our scandalous actions; other sins may shame us more, but these are a grief to the Spirit, because they are conceived in the heart, which is his presence-chamber, and place of special residence; and he is most grieved with these vain thoughts which haunt us in the time of our special addresses to God, because his peculiar operations are hindered, and the heart is set open to God's adversary in God's presence, and the world and Satan are suffered to interpose in the very time of the reign of grace, then when it shall be in solio, in its royalty, commanding all our faculties to serve it; this is to steal away the soul from under Christ's own arm, as a captain of a garrison

is troubled, when the enemies come to prey under the very walls, in the face of all his forces and strength; so certainly it is a grief to the Spirit when our lusts have power to disturb us in holy duties, and the heart is taken up with unclean glances, and worldly thoughts, then when we present ourselves before the Lord. God looks upon his people's sins as aggravated because committed in his own house: Jer. xxiii. 11, In my house I have found their wickedness;' what is this but to dare God to his very face? Solomon saith, A king sitting upon his throne scattereth away evil with his eyes,' Prov. xx. 8. They are bold men that dare break the laws when a magistrate is upon the throne, and actually exercising judgment against offenders; so it argueth much impudence that when we come to deal with God, as sitting upon the throne, and observing and looking upon us, that we can yet lend our hearts to our lusts, and suffer every vain thought to divert us. There is more of modesty, though little of sincerity, in them that say to their lusts, as Abraham to his servants: Gen. xii. 5, Tarry here while I go yonder and worship;' or, as they say, the serpent layeth aside her poison when she goeth to drink. When a man goeth to God he should leave his lusts behind him, not for a while, and with an intent to entertain them again, but for ever. However this argueth some reverence to God, and sense of the weight of holy duties; but when we bring them along with us, it is a sign we little mind the work we go about.

3. It is a spiritual disease. The soul hath its diseases as well as the body; the unsteady roving of the mind, or the disturbance of vain and impertinent thoughts, is one of those diseases,--shall I call it a spiritual madness, or fever, or shaking palsy, or all these? You know madmen make several relations, and rove from one thing to another, and are gone off from a sentence ere they have well begun it; our thoughts are as slippery and inconsistent as their speeches, therefore what is

this but the frenzy of the soul? What mad creatures would we seem to be, if all our thoughts were patent, or an invisible notary were lurking in our hearts to write them down! We run from object to object in a moment, and one thought looks like a mere stranger upon another; we wander and run through all the world in an instant. Oh, who can count the numberless operations and working of our mind in one duty! What impertinent excursions have we from things good to lawful; from lawful to sinful, from ordinarily sinful to downright blasphemous! Should any one of us, after he hath been some time exercised in duty, go aside and write down his thoughts, and the many interlinings of his own prayers, he would stand amazed at the madness and light discurrency of his own imaginations.

Or shall I call it the feverish distemper of their soul? Ægri somnia is a proverb; in fevers men have a thousand fancies and swimming toys in their dreams, and just so it is with our souls in God's worship. We bring that curse upon us spiritually, which corporally God threatened to bring upon the Jews: I will scatter you to the end of the earth.' We scatter our thoughts hither and thither without any consistency; the heart, in regard of this roving madness, is like a runagate servant, who, when he hath left his master, wandereth up and down, and knoweth not where to fix; or like those that are full of distracting business, that cannot make a set meal, but take their diet by snatches.

4. It argueth the loss and non-acceptance of our prayers. You are in danger to lose your worship, at least so much of it as you do not attend upon; and truly to a man that knows the value of that kind of traffic, this is a very great loss. You that are tradesmen are troubled if you happen to be abroad when a good customer cometh to deal with you; the ordinances of God are the market for your souls; if you had not been abroad with Esau, you might have received the blessing, and

gone away richly laden from a prayer, from the word, and the Lord's Supper; but you lose your advantages for want of attention; allowed distractions turn your prayers into sin, and make them no prayers. When the soul departeth from the body it is no longer a man, but a carcase; so when the thoughts are gone from prayer, it is no longer a prayer, the essence of the duty is wanting. What is prayer? Ana'basis tou nou, as Damascene defined it, the lifting up of the heart to God. Many have prayed without words, but never any prayed without lifting up, or pouring out the heart. If a man should kneel, and use a gesture of worship, and fall asleep, no doubt that man doth not pray. This is to sleep with the heart, and the words uttered are but like a dream, have but a slight touch of reason in them, a mere drowsy inattentive devotion; the soul is asleep though the eyes be not closed, and the senses locked up. Can we expect that God should hear us, and bless us, because of our mere outward presence? We are ashamed of those that sleep at a duty, and this is as bad or worse; they may sleep out of natural infirmity, as weakness, age, sickness, &c., but this doth more directly proceed from some slightness or irreverence. Well, then, with what face can we expect the fruit of that prayer to which we have not attended? It is a great presumption to desire God to hear those requests, a great part whereof we have not heard ourselves; if they be not worthy of our attention they are far more unworthy of God's. Cyprian, [249] or Ruffinus, or whoever was the author of the explication of the Lord's Prayer in Cyprian's works, hath a notable passage to this purpose: Quomodo te a Deo exaudiri postulas, cum te ipse non audias? Vis Deum esse memorem tui cum rogas, cum ipse tui memor non sis? Thou art unmindful of thyself; thou dost not hear thy self; and how canst thou with reason desire the blessing and comfort of the duty which thou thoughtest not worthy thine own attention and

regard?

I would not willingly grate too hard upon a tender conscience. It is a question that is often propounded, whether wandering thoughts do altogether frustrate a duty, and make it of none effect? and whether, in some cases, a virtual attention doth not suffice? There is an actual intension, and a virtual intension. The actual intension is when a soul doth distinctly and constantly regard everything that is said and done in a duty; and a virtual intension is when we keep only a disposition and purpose to attend, though many times we fail and are carried aside. This Aquinas calleth priorem intensionem; out of the Scripture we may call it, the setting of the heart to seek the Lord,' 1 Chron. xxii. 19.

Now, what shall we say in this case? On the one side, we must not be too strict, lest we prejudice the comfort and expectation of God's people. When did they ever manage a duty, but they are guilty of some wanderings? It is much to keep up our hearts to the main and solid requests that are made to God in prayer. But, on the other side, we must not be too remiss, lest we encourage indiligence and careless devotion. Briefly, then, by way of answer, there is a threefold distraction in prayer--distractio invita, negligens, et voluntaria.

1. There is distractio invita, an unwilling distraction, when the heart is seriously and solemnly set to seek God, and yet we are carried besides our purpose; for it is impossible so to shut doors and win dows but that some wind will get in--so to guard the heart as to be wholly free from vain thoughts; but they are not constant, frequent, allowed, but resisted, prayed against, striven against, bewailed; and then they are not iniquities, but infirmities, which the Lord will pardon; he will gather up the broken part of our prayers, and in mercy give us an answer; I say, where this distraction is retracted with grief, resisted with care, as Abraham drove away the fowls when they came to pitch upon

his sacrifice, Gen. xv. 11, it is to be reckoned among the infirmities of the saints, which do not hinder their consolation.

2. There is distractio negligens, a negligent distraction, when a man hath an intention to pray, and express his desires to God; but he prays carelessly, and doth not guard his thoughts, so that some times he wanders, and sometimes recovers himself again, and then strays again, and is in and out, off and on with God, as a spaniel roveth up and down, and is still crossing the ways, sometimes losing the company he goes with, and then retiring to them again. I cannot say, this man prayeth not at all, or that God doth not hear him, but he will have little comfort in his prayers; yea, if he be serious, they will minister more matter of grief to him than comfort; and therefore he ought to be more earnest and sedulous in resisting this infirmity, that he may be assured of audience; otherwise, if his heart be not affected with it in time, by degrees all those motions and dispositions of heart that are necessary to prayer will be eaten out and lost.

3. There is distractio voluntaria, a voluntary distraction, when men mind no more than the task or work wrought, and only go round in a track of accustomed duties, without considering with what heart they perform them: this is such a vanity of mind as turneth the whole prayer into sin.

Secondly, The causes of this roving and impertinent intrusion of vain thoughts.

1. Satan is one cause, who doth maxime insidiari orationibus (as Cassian speaketh), lie in wait to hinder the prayers of the saints; whenever we minister before the Lord, he is at our right hand ready to resist us, Zech. iii. 1. And therefore the apostle James, when he biddeth us draw nigh to God,' biddeth us also to resist the devil,' James iv. 7, 8; implying thereby that there is no drawing nigh to God

without resisting Satan. When a tale is told, and you are going about the affairs of the world, he doth not trouble you; for these things do not trouble him, or do any prejudice to his kingdom; but when you are going to God, and that in a warm, lively, affectionate manner, he will be sure to disturb you, seeking to abate the edge of your affections, or divert your minds. Formal prayers pattered over, Jo him no harm; but when you seriously set yourselves to call upon God, he saith within himself, This man will pray for God's glory, and then I am at a loss; for the coming of Christ's kingdom, and then mine goeth to wreck; that God's will may be done upon earth as it is in heaven, and that minds me of my old fall, and my business is to cross the will of God; he will pray for daily bread, and that strengthened dependence; for pardon and comfort, and then I lose ground (for the devils are the rulers of the darkness of this world,' Eph. vi. 12); he will pray to be kept from sin and temptation, and that is against me. Thus Satan is afraid of the prayers of the saints; he is concerned in every request you make to God; and therefore he will hinder or cheat you of your prayers; if you will needs be praying, he will carry away your hearts. Now, much he can do if you be not watchful; he can present objects to the senses which stir up thoughts, yea, pursue his temptations, and cast in one fiery dart after another, therefore we had need stand upon our guard.

2. The natural levity of our spirits. Man is a restless creature. We have much ado to stay our hearts for any space of time in one state, much more in holy things, from which we are naturally averse: Rom. vii. 21, When I would do good, evil is present with me.' to` kako`n para'keitai. Oh! consider this natural feebleness of mind, whereby we are unable to keep long to any employment, but are light, feathery, tossed up and down like a dried leaf before the wind, or as an empty vessel upon the waves. It is so with us in most businesses, especially

in those which are sacred. The apostle biddeth us pray without ceasing,' and we cannot do it whilst we pray; he is a stranger to God and his own heart who finds it not daily. This is an incurable vanity; though we often repent of it, yet it is not amended; a misery that God would leave upon our natures, to humble us while we are in the world, and that we may long for heaven; the angels and blessed spirits there are not troubled with those things; in heaven there is no complaining of wandering thoughts--there God is all in all; they that are there have but one object to fill their understandings, one object to give contentment to their desires, their hearts cleave to God inseparably by a perfect love; but here we are cumbered with much serving, and much work begets a multitude of thoughts in us: Ps. xciv. 11, The Lord knows the thoughts of man, that they are but vanity.' When we have summed up all the traverses, reasonings, and discourses of the mind, we may write at the bottom this, as the total sum--Here is nothing but vanity.

3. Another cause is practical atheism. We have little sense of things that are unseen, and lie within the veil, in the world of spirits; things that are seen have a great force upon us. Offer it now to thy governor,' saith the prophet, Mal. i. 8. God is afar off, both from our sight and apprehension; senses bind attention. If you speak to a man, your thoughts are settled, and you think of nothing else; but in speaking to God, you have not like attention, because you see him not: Exod. xxxii. 1, Make us gods to go before us.' Ay! we would have a visible god, whom we may see and hear; but the true God being a spirit, and an invisible power, all the service that we do him is a task performed more out of custom than affection, in a slight, perfunctory way.

1. Strong and unmortified lusts, which being rooted in us, and having the soul at most command, will trouble us, and distract us when we go

about any duty. Each man hath a mind, and can spend it unweariedly as he is inclined, either to covetousness, ambition, or sensuality; for where the treasure is, there will the heart be,' Mat. vi. 20. Set but the covetous man about the world, the voluptuous man about his pleasures, and the ambitious man about his honours and preferments, and will they suffer their thoughts to be taken off? surely no; but set either of these about holy things, and presently these lusts will be interposing: Ezek. xxxiii. 31, Their heart goeth after their covetousness.' The sins to which a man is most addicted will engross the thought; so that this is one sign by which a man may know his reigning sin, that which interrupts him most in holy duties; for when all other lusts are kept out, Satan will be sure to set the darling sin a-work to plead for him. If a man be addicted to the world, so will his musings be; if to mirth, and good cheer, and vain sports, his thoughts will be taken up about them; if to the inordinate love of women, his fancy will be rolling upon carnal beauty, and he will be firing his heart with unclean thoughts.

5. Want of love to God and holy things. Men are loath to come into God's presence for want of faith, and to keep there for want of love; love fixeth the thoughts, and drieth up those swimming toys and fancies that do distract us; we ponder and muse upon that in which we delight. Were our natural hatred of God and of the means of grace changed into a perfect love, we should adhere to him without distraction. We see where men love strongly, they are deaf and blind to all other objects--they can think and speak of no other thing; but because our love to God is weak, every vain occasion carrieth away our minds from him. You find this by daily experience; when your affections flag in an ordinance, your thoughts are soon scattered, weariness maketh way for wandering, your hearts are first gone, and then your minds. You complain you have

not a settled mind; the fault is, you have not a settled love, for that would cause you to pause upon things without weariness: Ps. i. 2, His delight is in the law of the Lord, and in that law doth he meditate day and night;' Ps. cxix. 97, O how I love thy law, it is my meditation all the day.' David's mind would never run upon the word so much if his heart were not there. Thoughts are at the command and beck of love; where love biddeth them go, they go; and where love biddeth them tarry, they tarry: the saints first delight, and then meditate.

6. Slightness and irreverence, or want of a sense of God's presence. A careless spirit will surely wander; but one deeply affected is fixed and intent. Jonah, when he prayed in the whale s belly, could he have an heart to forget his work? Daniel, when he prayed among the lions, could he mind anything else? When we are serious and pray in good earnest, we will call in all our thoughts, and hold them under command. This question was put to Basil, how a man should keep the mind free from distraction? His answer was--gi'gnetai o meteo'rismos apo` tes argi'as tou nou, kai` ex apisti'as me` pareinai to`n Theo`n exeta'zonta kardi'as kai` ne'phrous. [250] That is, that this evil came from slightness of heart, and unbelief of God's presence; for if a man did believe that God were before his eyes, searching the heart, and trying the reins, he would be serious: All things are naked and open to him with whom we have to do;' God looketh on, and so do the angels; he looketh on the heart, and will not you be serious? Scholars that have a truant mind, yet the presence of their masters forceth them to their books; the great God who telleth man his thought, he seeth our desires; and thoughts speak louder in his ears than our words; therefore possess the heart with a dread of his glorious presence, and with the weight and importance of the works we are about: were we to deal with man in a case of life and death, we would weigh our words and not rove like

madmen.

7. The curiosity of the senses, these occasion a diversion. It is the office of the fancy to present, as in a glass, whatsoever is received by the external senses, or offered by the memory, and so the understanding taketh notice of it; the wandering eye causeth a wandering heart. Solomon saith, Prov. xvii. 24, The fool's eyes are to the ends of the earth;' first, his eyes rove, and then his heart. The apostle Peter saith of unclean persons, that they have eyes full of adultery,' 2 Pet. ii. 14, moichali'dos, of the adulteress (as the word signifieth); the eye is rolled upon the object, and then the dart is by the fancy transmitted to the heart. Senses are the windows and doors of the soul; keep the senses if you would keep the heart. Job was at a severe appointment with his eyes, Job xxxi. 1. It is good when we go to God to renew these covenants, to agree with the heart that we will not go to God without it; with the eyes and ears, that we will not see and hear anything but what concerns our work. It was a strange consistency and fixedness which Josephus speaketh of, [251] when Faustus, Cornelius, and Furius, and Fabius with their troops had broken into the city of Jerusalem, and some fled one way and some another, yet the priests went on with their sacrifices and the holy rites of the temple, as if they heard nothing; though they rushed on them with their swords, yet they preferred the duty of their religion, before their own safety; and strange is that other instance of the Spartan youth in Plutarch, that held the censer to Alexander whilst he was sacrificing, and though a coal lighted upon his flesh, he suffered it to burn there, rather than by any crying out he would disturb the rites of their heathenish superstition. Certainly these instances should shame us Christians, that do not hold the senses under a more severe restraint, but upon every light occasion suffer them to trouble and distract us in worship.

8. Carking and distrustful cares. When we are torn in pieces with the cares of the world, we cannot have a composed heart, but our minds will waver, and our dangers will recur to our thoughts, and hinder the exercise of our faith. God took special care of the Jews, when they went up to worship, that they might have nothing to trouble them; and therefore he saith, Exod. xxxiv. 24, None of the nations shall desire the land when thou shalt go up to appear before the Lord thy God thrice in the year; and Augustine [252] gives the reason of it, lest they should be distracted with thoughts about their own preservation--Vult Deus intelligi ut securus quisque ascender et, nec de terrâ suâ sollicitus esset, Deo promittente custodiam: and one of the arguments by which Paul commendeth single life is freedom from the incumbrances of the world: That we may serve the Lord without distraction,' 1 Cor. vii. 35.

Thirdly, Remedies. I might speak many things by way of mere counsel about guarding the senses, the use and abuse of a form, &c.; but all these are but like external applications in physic, or topical medicines, as the binding of things to the wrists of the hands, &c., which work no perfect cure of a disease, unless the distemper be purged away; therefore I shall speak to those things that are most effectual.

1. Go to God and wait for the power of his grace. David speaketh of it as his work: Ps. lxxxvi. 11, Unite my heart to the fear of thy name,' fix it, gather it together, enoson te`n ka'rdi'an mou (saith the Septuagint [253]), make it one. The heart is multiplied when it is distracted by several thoughts. God hath our hearts in his own hand, and when we can keep them up no longer, then he holds them up; when he withdraws his grace, we lose our life and seriousness; as meteors hang in the air as long as the heat of the sun is great, but when the sun is gone down they fall; as long as the love of God and the work of his

grace are powerful in us, we are kept in a lively heavenly frame; but as that abateth, the soul swerveth and returneth to vanity and sin. We read, Acts xvi. 14, 15, that The Lord opened the heart of Lydia, so that she attended to the things that were spoken of Paul.' Attention there beareth somewhat a larger sense than we now consider it in, namely, a deep regard to the doctrine of life; yet this sense of fixedness of spirit cannot be excluded. Go to God, then, pray him to keep thy heart together; he that hath set bounds to the sea, and can bind up the waves in a heap, and stop the sun in its flight, certainly he can fasten and establish thy heart, and keep it from running out.

2. Meditate on the greatness of him before whom we are. It is of great consequence in duties to consider whom we take to be our party with whom we have to do, Heb. iv. 13. In the word, God is the party that speaketh to us: Thou shalt be as my mouth,' Jer. xv. 16; As if God spake by us,' 2 Cor. v. 20. It is God speaketh; and the heathen king of Moab showeth such reverence, that when Ehud said, I have a message to thee from God,' he arose out of his seat, Judges iii. 20. So in prayer you have to do with God; you do as really minister before him as the angels that abide in his presence. Oh, if you could see him that is invisible, you would have more reverence. A man that is praying or worshipping should behave himself as if he were in heaven immediately before God, in the midst of all the blessed angels, those ten thousand times ten thousand that stand before God. [254] Oh, with what reverence, with what fear, should a poor worm creep into his presence! Think then of that glorious all-seeing God, with, whom thou canst converse in thoughts as freely as with men in words; he knoweth all that is in thy heart, and seeth thee through and through. If you had spoken all those things you have thoughts upon, you would be odious to men; if all the blasphemy, uncleanness, worldly projects, were known to

those that join with us, should we be able to hold up our heads for blushing? And doth not the Lord see all this? Could we believe his inspection of the heart, there would be a greater awe upon us.

3. Mortify those lusts that are apt to withdraw our minds. He that indulgeth any one vile affection will never be able to pray aright. Every duty will give you experience what corruption to resist, what thoughts we are haunted and pestered with, when we come to God. God requireth prayer, that we may be weary of our lusts, and that the trouble that we find from them in holy exercises may exasperate our souls against them. We are angry with an importunate beggar that will not be satisfied with any reasonable terms, but is always obtruding upon us. Every experience in this kind should give us an advantage to free our hearts from this disturbance. The whole work of grace tendeth to prayer; and the great exercise and employment of the spiritual life is watching unto prayer, Eph. vi. 18; and that prayer be not interrupted, 1 Peter iii. 2.

4. Before the duty there must be an actual preparation, or a solemn, discharge of all impediments, that we may not bring the world along with us. Put off thy shoes off thy feet,' saith God to Moses, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.' Surely we should put off our carnal distractions when we go about holy duties. Gird up the loins of your minds,' saith the apostle Peter, 1 Peter i. 13, an allusion to long garments worn in that country: it is dangerous to come to prayer with a loose heart. My heart is fixed saith David, O God, my heart is fixed,' Ps. lvii. 7; that is, fitted, prepared, bended to God's worship: the soul must be set, put into a dexterous ready posture. Claudatur contra adversarium pectus, et soli Deo pateat, ne ad se hostem Dei accedere tempore orationis patiatur.--(Cyp. lib. De Oratione Domini.) There must be a resolved shutting of the heart against God's

enemy, lest he insinuate with us, and withdraw our minds.

5. Be severe to your purpose, and see that you regard nothing but what the duty leadeth you unto. It is the devil's policy to cheat us of the present duty by an unseasonable interposition. Satan beginneth with us in good things, that he may draw us to worse. What is unseasonable is naught; watch against the first diversion, how plausible soever; it is an intruding thought that breaketh a rank. In this case say as the spouse, Cant, iii., I charge you that you awake not my beloved till he please;' such a rigid severity should you use against the starting of the heart. If Satan should at first cast in a thought of blasphemy, that would make thee quake and shake; therefore he beginneth with plausible thoughts; but be careful to observe the first stragglings; yea, be not diverted by thy very strivings against diversions, and therefore do not dispute with suggestions, but despise them; nor stand examining temptations, but reject them, [255] as blind Bartimeus regarded not the rebukes of the people, but cried the more after Christ; or as travellers do not stand beating back the dogs that bark at them, but hold on their course; this is to be religiously obstinate and severe to our purpose. Satan contemned, hath the less advantage against you; when he is writing images upon the fancy, do not vouchsafe to look upon them. A crier in the court that is often commanding silence, disturbeth the court more than they that make the noise; so disputing with our distractions, increaseth them. They better are avoided by a severe contempt.

6. Bring with you to every holy service strong spiritual affections; our thoughts would not be at such a distance from our work if our affections were more ready and more earnestly set. It is the unwilling servant that is loath to stay long at his work, but is soon gone; could we bring ourselves more delightfully to converse with God, our hearts

would hold our minds close, and we would not straggle so often as we do; therefore see you do this, or you do nothing. I was glad,' saith David, when they said unto me, Come let us go into the house of the Lord,' Ps. cxxii. 1. Were we of this frame of spirit, many directions would not need. Now what should hinder us from, being thus affected? Are not the ordinances of God the special means of our communion with him? and the throne of grace the very porch of heaven? Can we be better than in God's company, pleading with him for our soul's good, and waiting for his blessing? Therefore let us be glad, and rejoice in his. presence, and you will not easily find such outstrayings of mind and thought.

7. Remember the weight and consequence of the duties of religion, that is a cure for slightness; you are dealing with God in a case of life and death, and will you not be serious? With what diligence and earnestness doth an advocate plead with a man in a case wherein he himself is not concerned, either for the life of another, or the inheritance or goods of another! [256] And wilt not thou plead earnestly with God when thy soul is in danger, when it is a case of eternal life and death, as all matters that pass between God and us are? Certainly, if we did consider the weight of the business, the heart would be freed from this garish wantonness. If Christ had taken thee aside into the garden, as he took Peter, James, and John, and thou hadst seen him praying and trembling under his agonies, thou wouldst have seen that it is no light matter to go to God in a case of the salvation of souls, though thou hast never so much assurance of the issue, for so Christ had: the frequent return of Christian duties maketh us to forget the consequence of them. In hearing the word, be serious, it is your life: Deut. xxxii. 46, Hearken unto the words of the law, for this is not a vain thing, because it is your life;' thy

everlasting estate is upon trial, and the things that are spoken concern your souls; every act of communion with God, every participation of his grace, hath an influence upon eternity. Say, therefore, as Nehemiah in another case, Neh. vi. 3, I am doing a great work, I cannot come down.' Can you have an heart to mind other things, when you are about so great a work as the saving of your souls?

8. Let every experimental wandering make you more humble and careful. If men did lay their wanderings to heart, and retract them, even every glance with a sigh, the mind would not so boldly, so constantly digress and step aside; all actions displeasing are not done so readily; therefore it is good to bewail these distractions. Do not count them as light things. Cassianus, speaking of these wandering thoughts, saith, The most that come to worship, being involved in greater sins, scarce count distraction of thoughts an evil, and so the mischief is increased upon them. [257] It is a sad thing to be given up to a vain mind, and such a frothy spirit as cannot be serious; therefore if we do soundly humble ourselves for these offences, and they did once become our burden, they would not be our practice. One saith, [258] that huntsmen observe of young dogs, that if a fresh game come in view, they leave their old scent, but if soundly beaten off from it, they kindly take to their first pursuit; the application is easy,--did we rate our hearts for this vanity, and pray against the sins of our prayers with deep remorse, this evil would not be so familiar with us.

9. A constant heavenliness and holiness of heart. If men were as they should be, holy, en pase anastrophe--1 Peter i. 14, In all manner of conversation,' in solemn duties, good and proper thoughts would be more natural and kindly to us. They that live in a constant communion with God do not find it such a tedious business to converse with him; if they have any excursion of thoughts, it is in their daily work, and the

offices of the common life, which they are ever seasoning with some gracious meditations and short ejaculations; when they are in duty, they are where they would be; constant gravity and seriousness is a great help to them. Men allow themselves a lawless liberty in their ordinary conversations, and then in prayer they know not how to gather up their hearts. Such as men are out of prayer, such they will be in prayer; we cannot expect that pangs of devotion should come upon us all of a sudden, and that when we come reeking into the world, we should presently leap into a heavenly frame.

10. The next remedy is frequent solemn meditation. If the understanding were oftener taken up with the things of God, and our thoughts were kept in more frequent exercise, they would the better come to hand. There is a double advantage comes to us by meditation:--

1. The soul gets more abundance of heart-warming knowledge, and therefore will not be so barren and dry, which certainly is a cause of wandering: Ps. xlv. 1, My heart inditeth a good matter, and then my tongue is as the pen of a ready writer.' A man that boileth and concocts truths in his heart, hath a great readiness of words and affections. There is a good treasure within him, Mat. xii. 35, out of which he may spend freely. One expresseth it thus: [259] He that hath store of gold and silver in his pocket, and but a few brass farthings, will more readily, upon every draught, come out with gold and silver than brass farthings; so he that hath stocked his heart with holy thoughts will not find carnal musings so rife and frequent.'

2. By use a man gets a greater command over himself. When we constantly leave the thoughts at random, and never lay restraints upon them, it is in vain to think we shall keep them in order when we please. Fierce creatures are tame to those that use to command them; every art is difficult at first, as writing, singing, playing upon an instrument;

but we get a facility by use and exercise; yea, not only a facility, but a delight in them; and those things that at first we thought impossible, by a little practice grow easy. Certainly, the way of the Lord is strength to the upright,' Prov. xi. 29, and the more we set ourselves to any good thing, the more readily and prepared are we for it.

[248] Chrys. Hom. 74 in Mat.

[249] Cypr. de Orat. Domin.

[250] Basil in Regulis Brevioribus.

[251] Josephus de Bello Judaeorum.

[252] Augustinus, Quaest. 161, in Exod.

[253] This is the rendering of Symmachus, not of the LXX.--ED.

[254] Omnino nos oportet orationis tempore curiam intrare coelestem illam, utique curiam in quâ Rex regum sedet in stellato solio, circumdante eum innumerabili et ineffabili beatorum spirituum exercitu, ubi et ipse qui viderit, quia majorem numerum non invenit, Millia ait millium ministrabant ei, et decies centena millium assistebant ei, quanta ergo cum reverentiâ, quanto timore, quanta illuc humilitate accedere debet e palude sua procedens et repens ranuncula vilis; quam tremebundus, quam supplex, quam denique humilis et sollicitus, et toto intentus animo majestati gloriae in praesentia angelorum, in concilio justorum et congregatione assistere poterit vilis homuncio.'--Bernard de Quatuor Modis Orandi.

[255] Est praeterea optimum ad attendendum remedium si imagines rerum inutiles non solum non advertas, non excutias, non examines, sed ita te habeas quasi eas non aspicere digneris; nam ipsum advertere, et examinare istas cogitationes evagari est; et jam adversarius aliquid a nobis extorsit,' &c.--Jacobus Alvarez.

[256] Si cum sublimi homine, non dicam pro vita, et salute nostra, sed

etiam pro alicujus lucri commodo supplicamus, totam in eum mentis, et corporis aciem defigimus, de nutu ejus trepida expectatione pendemus, non mediocriter formidantes, ne quid forte ineptum et incongruum verbum misericordiam audientis avertat. Quanto magis cum illi occultorum omnium cognitori pro imminenti perpetuae mortis periculo supplicamus,' &c.--Cassian, Col. xxiii. c. 7.

[257] Haec omnia nonnullis qui sunt crassioribus vitiis involuti levia, atque a peccato pene aliena videntur, scientibus tamen perfectionis bonum etiam minimarum rerum multitudo gravissima est.'--Cassian, Col. xxiii. c. 7.

[258] Hooker on Acts, ii. 37.

[259] Cobbet of Prayer.

Chapter 32

HOW OUGHT WE TO IMPROVE OUR

BAPTISM?

HOW OUGHT WE TO IMPROVE OUR BAPTISM?

Be baptized every one of you m the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins.--Acts II. 38.

THIS chapter gives us an account of the pouring out of the Spirit, according to promise, presently after Christ's ascension. As soon as the Spirit was poured out, the apostles were enabled to speak in various languages, to the astonishment and wonder of the hearers. This was for the glory of God, the confirmation of the gospel, and to authorise them as special messengers sent by Christ.

At the sight of this miracle some wonder, others mock, as if this speaking with divers tongues had been a confused jabbering that proceeded from the fumes of wine, rather than the gift and operation of the Holy Spirit.

To satisfy both, Peter declares in a sermon the effect and intent of the miracle, proving Jesus, whom they had crucified, to be Lord and Christ. When they heard this, many of the most obstinate among them were pricked at the heart,' and relented A happy sermon it was that Peter preached, it brought in thousands of souls to Christ; the first handsel of the power of the Spirit and success of the gospel.

It is good to observe what course they took for ease and relief after this piercing and brokenness of heart; they said to Peter, and the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?' This is the usual question of men under a sound and thorough conviction.

To their serious question Peter makes a seasonable answer, ver. 38. It is the part of a good physician not only to discover the disease, but

also to prescribe a remedy; especially should spiritual physicians be tender of broken-hearted sinners, and willing and ready to give them counsel.

In Peter's direction and counsel to them, observe--(1.) What he persuades them to do. (2.) By what motive and argument; what they should do, and what they should receive.

In the advice, he persuades them to repentance, and to be baptized in the name of Christ. The latter we are upon.

For explaining it, we may inquire:--

Quest. 1. Why is baptism mentioned, rather than faith and other things more internal and necessary to salvation?

I answer--(1.) Certainly faith is implied; for, Mark xvi. 16, He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.' Baptism is an open and real profession of Christ crucified; so that, Be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ' is as much as be Baptized, believing on the name of the Lord Jesus, for the remission of sins,' (2.) Baptism is mentioned because it was the visible rite of receiving proselytes to Christ. Now, it imported them who were convinced as persecutors to turn professors, if they would have ease for their consciences; and therefore not only to believe with the heart, but to make open profession of faith in Christ, Rom. x. 10.

Quest. 2. Why in the name of Christ only? The Father and the Holy Ghost are not mentioned, according to the prescript form, Mat. xxviii. 19. I answer--He speaks not of the form of baptism, but the use and end thereof. Now, the great use of baptism is that we may have benefit by the mystery of redemption by Christ; therefore, else where we are said to be baptized into Jesus Christ.' Rom. vi. 3; and to put on Christ,' Gal. iii. 27. He is the head of the church, and by baptism we are planted into his mystical body.

This being premised, my work shall be to show what use and respect baptism has unto this benefit of obtaining remission of sins by Jesus Christ. I shall do it in these considerations:--

1. That God hath ever delighted to deal with his creatures in the way of a covenant, that we might know what to expect from him, and might look upon ourselves as under the firmer bonds of obedience to his blessed majesty. In a covenant, which is the most solemn transaction between man and man, both parties are engaged--God to us, and we to God. It is not meet that one party should be bound and the other free; therefore both are bound to each other, God to bless and we to obey. Indeed, in the first covenant, the debitum poenae is only mentioned, because that only took place: Gen. ii. 17, In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.' But the other part is implied, and it doth in effect speak thus much, Do and live, sin and die.'

2. Because the first covenant was broken on our part, God was pleased to enter into a second, wherein he would manifest the glory of his redeeming grace and pardoning mercy to fallen man; this was brought about in Christ: 2 Cor. v. 19, God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself;' and therefore this second covenant is called a covenant of peace,' as being made with us after the breach, and when man was obnoxious to the wrath of God: Isa. liv. 10, The covenant of my peace shall not be removed,' Man needeth such a covenant, and God, appeased by Christ, offereth it to us.

3. In this covenant of peace, the privileges and duties are suited to the state in which man was when God invited him into covenant with himself. Man was fallen from his duty, and obnoxious to the wrath and displeasure of God; and therefore the new covenant is a doctrine of repentance and remission of sins. What is preach the gospel to every creature,' Mark xvi. 16, is in Luke xxiv. 47, that repentance and

remission of sin should be preached in his name among all nations;' for that is the gospel, or the new remedial law of our Lord Jesus: repentance to heal us and set us in joint again as to our duty; remission of sins; to recover us into God's favour. Both these benefits we have by the Redeemer: Acts v. 31, Him hath God exalted to give repentance and remission of sins to Israel;' he giveth the one simply, and both giveth and requireth the other; so that, by the new covenant, remission of sins is conveyed to all true penitents.

4. More distinctly to understand the tenor of this new and second covenant, we must consider both the duties and the privileges thereof; for in every covenant there is ratio dati et accepti--there is some thing promised and given, and something required; and usually the promise consists of somewhat which the party is willing of, and the duty or condition required of that to which he is more backward and loath to submit. So in the covenant of grace, in the promise God respects man's want, in the duty his own honour. Every man would have pardon and be saved from hell, but God will have subjection; even corrupt nature is not against desires of happiness; these God makes use of to gain us to holiness. All men readily catch at felicity, and would have impunity, peace, comfort, glory, but are unwilling to deny the flesh, to renounce the credit, profit, or pleasure of sin, or to grow dead to the world and worldly things. Now God promiseth what we desire, on condition that we will submit to those things that we are against: as we sweeten bitter pills to children, that they may swallow them the better; they love the sugar though they loathe the aloes. So doth God invite us to our duty by our interest. Therefore whosoever would enter into the gospel-state must resolve to take the blessings and benefits offered for his happiness, and the duties required for his work.

Indeed, accepting of the benefits is a part of the condition, because

we treat with an invisible God about a happiness that lieth in another world; but it is but part, there are other terms, and therefore we must draw nigh with a true heart, in full assurance of faith,' Heb. x. 22. With a true heart, resolving upon the duties of the covenant, in full assurance of faith, depending upon God's word that he will give us the blessings.

5. The privileges are two--pardon and life. These are the great blessings offered in the new covenant; you have them both together, Acts xxvi. 18, To turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God; that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and in heritance among them that are sanctified by faith.' These two benefits are most necessary, the one to allay the fears of the guilty creature, and the other to gratify desires of happiness, which are natural to us; the one to remedy the misery incurred by sin and the fall of man, the other to establish our true and proper felicity in the everlasting enjoyment of God; the one to ease our consciences, and support us against troubles of mind, the other to comfort us against the outward troubles and afflictions which sin hath introduced into the world. In short, the one to free us from deserved punishment, the other to assure us of undeserved blessedness; the one importeth deliverance from eternal death, and the other entrance into eternal life.

6. The duties thereof do either concern our first entrance into the Christian state, or our progress therein. Our Lord represented it under the notions of the gate,' and the way,' Mat. vii. 14, Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life.' Other scriptures deliver it under the notions of making covenant, and keeping covenant with God: making covenant, Ps. l. 5; keeping covenant, Ps. xxv. 10, Ps. ciii. 18. The covenant must not only be made, but kept.

[1.] As to entering into covenant with God, there is required true

repentance and faith: Mark i. 15, Eepent, and believe the gospel,' Repentance respects God as our end; faith respects Christ as the great means or way to the Father: Acts xx. 21, Repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.' God is our end, for Christ died to bring us to God,' 1 Peter iii. 18; and Christ is our way, John xiv. 6; and whole of Christianity is a coming to God by Christ, Heb. vii. 25. Now, in our first entrance faith and repentance are both mixed; and it is hard to sever them, and show what belongs to the one, and what to the other; at least it would perplex the discourse. Both together imply that a man be turned from a life of sin to God by faith in Christ, or a renouncing the devil, the world, and the flesh, and devoting and dedicating himself to God.

(1.) A renouncing of the devil, the world, and the flesh; for these are the three great enemies of God and our salvation: Eph. ii. 2, 3, In time past ye walked according to the course of this world, after the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that works now in the children of disobedience, among whom also we had our conversation in the lusts of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind.' There all our enemies appear abreast: the devil, as the grand deceiver and principle of all wickedness; the world, with its pleasures, honours, and profits, as the bait by which it doth deceive us, and steal away our hearts from God, and pervert and divert us, that we should not look after the one thing necessary; the flesh is that corrupt inclination in us which entertains and closeth with these temptations, to the neglect of God and the wrong of our own souls; this is very importunate to be pleased, and is the proper internal cause of all our mischief; for James i. 14, Every man is enticed and drawn away by his own lust.' These must be renounced before we can return to God; for till we put away our idols we cannot incline our hearts to the true

God, Josh. xxiv. 23. And these are the great idols by which our hearts are estranged from him. When God is laid aside, self interposeth as the next heir, and that which we count self is the flesh. Many wrong their own souls, but never any man hated his own flesh. That which feeds the flesh is the world; and the devil, by proposing the bait, irritateth and stirreth up our affections. Therefore we must be turned from Satan to God; we must be delivered from the present evil world; we must abstain from fleshly lusts, for God will have no copartners and competitors in our hearts.

(2.) A devoting and giving up ourselves to God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as our God, 2 Cor. viii. 3, and Rom. vi. 13; as our owner by creation, Ps. c. 3; and by redemption, 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20; as our sovereign lord, Jer. xxiv. 8, Isa. xxvi. 13, Other lords besides thee have had dominion over us,' &c.; as the fountain of our life and blessedness: Ps. xxxi. 14, I trusted in the Lord, I said, Thou art my God;' Lam. iii. 24, The Lord is my portion, saith my soul, therefore will I hope in him;' Ps. cxix. 57, I have said, Thou art my portion, therefore I will keep thy precepts.'

[2.] As to our progress and perseverance, which is our walking in the narrow way, and shows the sincerity and heartiness of our consent in making the covenant--and besides, this is not the work of a day, but of our whole lives--we have continual need of coming to God by Christ. Here three things are required:--

(1.) As to the enemies of God and our souls, there must be a forsaking as well as a renouncing: the devil must be forsaken; we must be no more of his party and confederacy; we must resist, stand out against all his batteries and assaults, 1 Peter v. 8, 9; the world must be overcome, 1 John v. 4, 5; and the flesh must be subdued and mortified, Gal. v. 24, that we be no more governed by the desires thereof, and if we be

sometimes foiled, we must not go back again, but renew our resolutions; and the drift of our lives must still be for God and heaven.

(2.) As to God, to whom we have devoted ourselves, we must love and please and serve him all our days, Luke i. 75. We must make it our work to love him, and count it our happiness to be beloved by him, and carefully apply ourselves to seek his favour, and cherish a fresh sense of it upon our hearts, and continue with patience in well doing, Rom. ii. 7, till we come to the complete sight and love of him in heaven, 1 John iii. 2.

(3.) You must always live in the hope of the coming of Christ, and everlasting glory: Titus ii. 13, Looking for the blessed hope;' and Jude 21, Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus unto eternal life.' As we did at first thankfully accept of our recovery by Christ, and at first consent to renounce the devil, the world, and the flesh, and resolve to follow God's counsel and direction, we must still persevere in this mind, and use his appointed means in order to our final happiness. The sum, then, of our Christianity is, that we should by true repentance and faith forsake the world, the flesh, and the devil, and give up ourselves to God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, that he may take us for his reconciled children, and, for Christ's sake, forgive all our sins; and by his Spirit give us grace to persevere in those resolutions, till our full and final happiness come in hand.

7. This covenant, consisting of such duties and privileges as God hath confirmed by certain visible ordinances, commonly called sacraments, as baptism and the Lord's Supper; both which, but in a different manner, respect the whole tenor of the covenant. For as the covenant bindeth mutually on God's part and ours, so these duties have a mutual aspect or respect to what God does, and what we must do. On God's part they are a sign and a seal, on our part they are a badge and a bond.

[1.] On God's part they are sealing or confirming signs. As circumcision is called, a sign' or seal of the righteousness which is by faith.' Rom. iv. 11; that is, of the grace offered to us in Christ; so is baptism, which came in the room of circumcision: Col. ii. 11, 12, In whom ye are circumcised, buried with him in baptism.' Surely the gospel ordinances signify as much grace as the ordinances of the legal covenant. If circumcision was a sign and seal of the righteousness which is by faith, or a pledge of God's good-will to us in Christ, so is baptism, so is the Lord's Supper; they are a sign to signify and a seal to confirm, to represent the grace and assure the grant of pardon and life. As, for instance, baptism signifies pardon and life, so does the Lord's Supper, Mat. xxvi. 28, 29; that for our growth and nourishment, this for our initiation. Baptism is under our consideration at present, that it hath respect to remission of sins. The text is clear for it, and so are many other scriptures. It was Ananias' advice to Paul, Acts xxii. 16, Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, and call on the name of the Lord.' So Eph. v. 26, That he might sanctify and cleanse us by the washing of water through the word.' The washing represents the washing away the guilt and filth of sin; it signifies also our resurrection to a blessed and eternal life. Baptism saveth by the resurrection of Christ, 1 Peter iii. 21. Well, then, it is a sealing sign. When God promised longer life to Hezekiah. 2 Kings xx. 8, he said, What shall be the sign that the Lord will heal me?' So when he promiseth pardon and life to us, What shall be the sign that the Lord will do this for us? Baptism is this sign; a witness between us and God: Gen. xxxi. 48, This heap is a witness between thee and me.'

[2.] On our part they are a badge and a bond to oblige us to the duties of the covenant--a badge of the profession, and a bond to engage us to

the duties which that profession calls for. As the apostle speaks of circumcision, that whosoever is circumcised is a debtor to the whole law,' Gal. v. 3, binds himself to the observances of Moses; so a Christian, by being baptized, becomes a debtor, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh, &c., Rom. viii. 12. And it is called an answer towards God,' 1 Peter iii. 21; the answer supposes the demands of the covenant; and so it is an undertaking faithfully to perform the conditions required of us, a vow or an obligation whereby we reckon ourselves bound to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness, through Jesus Christ our Lord.' Rom. vi. 11. It bindeth us chiefly to the duties that belong to our entrance, as the Lord's Supper doth more directly to the duties which belong to our progress; it bindeth us to a true belief of the gospel, or an acceptance of Christ, and consent to the covenant of grace; to renounce the devil, the world, and the flesh, and to give up ourselves unto God; and therefore the baptismal covenant, by which we are initiated into Christianity, is expressed by our being baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, Mat. xxviii. 19, which implies a giving up ourselves to them in their distinct personal relations. To the Father, that we may return to him, and obey him as our rightful Lord; that we may love him, and depend upon him as the fountain of all our good and all-sufficient happiness, and prefer his favour before all the sensual pleasures of the world. We are baptized in the name of Christ, that we may believe in him, accept him as our Saviour and Redeemer, expecting to be saved by his merits, righteousness, and intercession, from the wrath of God, and guilt of sin, and eternal death. To the Holy Ghost, as our guide, sanctifier, and comforter, that he may free us from sin, change us into the image and likeness of Christ, and lead us into all truth and godliness, and comfort us with the sense of our present interest in God's love, and

the hopes of future glory.

8. These visible confirming ordinances give us great advantages above the word and bare proposal of the covenant.

[1.] As these sealing signs are an expression of God's earnest and sincere respect to our salvation. God hath opened his mind in his word concerning his love and good-will to sinners in Christ; and he hath also added his seal, that the charter of his grace might be more valid and authentic. It argueth the goodness and communicativeness of God, to give notice in his word; but his solicitousness and anxious care for our good, to give visible assurance in the sacraments, as being willing ek perissou, over and above to satisfy the heirs of promise.' If a man be more than ordinarily cautious to make all sure, it is a sign his heart is upon the thing. Surely it is a great condescension that God would dispose his grace into a covenant form; but it is a further condescension that he would add seals, which needed not on his part; but he added them to give us the more strong consolation.' Nudum pactum, a naked promise, is not so valid and authentic as when articles of agreement are put into a formal instrument and deed of law, and that signed and sealed, and interchangeably delivered; this breeds more confidence and security on both sides. God's word certifieth us of his good-will; but when he is pleased to make a formal indenture of it, and to sign it and seal it, it doth breed more assurance in our minds that his promises are made with a real intent to perform them, and bindeth us the more firmly to God, when, besides our naked promise, there is a kind of vow and oath on our part, solemnly entered into by baptism.

[2.] There is this advantage in the sacraments above the word, that they are a closer application. The word speaks to all promiscuously, as inviting; the sacrament to every one in particular, as obliging. By the word none are excluded from the grace offered upon God's terms: Go

preach the gospel to every creature;' but by the sacrament, every one is expressly admonished of his duty. The object revealed in the word is like the brazen serpent, which without difference was exposed to the eye of all, that whosoever looked upon it might be healed;' but the same object offered in the sacraments is like the blood sprinkled on the door-posts, that every man might be assured that his family should be in safety. Now the reason of this difference is, because things propounded in the word are like a treaty between God and us, or an offer and a debating of matters till the parties do agree. But sacraments are not of use till both sides have agreed upon the conditions of the covenant. In adults, at least, the word conduceth to the making of the covenant, but sacraments suppose it made; therefore, the word universally propoundeth that which in the seals is particularly applied. Now those things do not affect us so much which are spoken indifferently to all, as those that are particularly applied to ourselves, be cause they stir us up to a more accurate care and endeavour to fulfil the duty incumbent upon us. The conditions are propounded in the word, Repent and believe, and I will pardon, and give thee eternal life. But the sacraments suppose an actual consent, that thou hast done, or undertaken to do so; and then God comes and saith, Take this as an undoubted pledge, that thou shalt have what I have promised; which doth more increase our hope and persuade our duty.
[3.] By these sealing signs we are solemnly invested into a right to the things promised, as when we are put in possession of what we have bargained for by due formalities of law: This is my body:' that is our solemn investiture into the privileges purchased by Christ's crucified body. A believer receiveth Christ in the word, John i. 12, and he receiveth Christ in the Lord's Supper. What is the difference? There his right is solemnly owned and confirmed in the way which God hath ap

pointed. As soon as a man consents to a bargain, he hath an interest in the thing bargained for, but the right is made more explicit when it is delivered to him by some formalities of law, as a house by a key, a field by a turf or twig; in such delivery we say, This key is my house, this turf or twig is my field. So are we put in possession of Christ by these words: This is my body.' Every penitent and believing sinner hath a right to Christ and pardon; but his solemn infeoffment is by the sacraments: Repent, and be baptized every one of you, for the remission of sins;' or, as it is, Acts xxii. 14, Arise and be baptized, for the washing away of thy sins.' God gave Abraham the land of promise by word of mouth; but, Gen. xiii., he bids him go through the land, and view it, and build an altar, and offer sacrifice there; then was he actually invested in the gift. God gave Israel a grant of Canaan, but the clusters, of Eschol were, as it were, the livery and seisin of it. Though the gift be sufficiently made over by the promise, yet it is further ratified, and more solemnly conveyed and delivered by the sacraments.

[4.] This is one advantage more, that the great mysteries of godliness are laid before our eyes in some visible rites, and so have greater force to excite the mind to serious consideration. When God will condescend to give us help against our infirmities, it must be by the senses, by which all knowledge comes into the soul. Now feeling, smelling, tasting, seem not so fit for this, as being more gross, and conducing to the welfare of the body; but seeing and hearing convey objects to the understanding, and therefore are called the senses of discipline and learning. Now the covenant is made by words, which strike the ear; but the seals by visible things set it before our eyes, and, as the apostle saith, Christ is crucified among us, and evidently set forth,' Gal. iii. 1. The sight doth in a more lively manner stir up

the mind than the bare hearing. Washing from sin doth fitly represent to us, and raise thoughts in us about, the sanctification of the Spirit, and so in a lively manner excite us to expect this benefit.

Use. Let us not be slight in the use and improvement of baptism; for it implieth a solemn covenanting with God, that we may obtain remission of sins, and eternal life. John the Baptist calleth it, Mark i. 4, The baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.' Therefore, let us reflect upon ourselves, We are all baptized, but what are we the better? Have we the more confidence of the pardon of our sins, and a greater sense of our covenant vow, to die unto sin and live unto God? We cannot have the former without the latter; both must be regarded by us. Volateranus reporteth of Lucian, that scoffing atheist, that when he revolted from the profession of Christianity, he scoffed at his baptism, saying, Se nihil ex eo consecutum quam quod nomen ipsius esset corruptum ex Lucio, Lucianus factum--that he got no thing by his baptism but a syllable to his name, it being changed from Lucius to Lucianus, Alas! what do most get by their baptism but a name? It should not be so with you; you may have great advantage by it if you improve it to the ends for which it was appointed. To quicken you, consider:--

1. Baptism is a perpetual bond upon us, obliging us to repentance and holy life, Rom. vi. 4, therefore the scripture often reasoneth from it, as Rom. vi. 2, How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?' He argueth not ab impossibili, but ab incongruo--not from what is impossible, but what will misbecome our renewed state, which we profess to enter into by baptism, which is a vowed death to sin, and a bond wherewith we bind our souls to new obedience. So else where, Col. iii. 1, Ye are arisen with Christ,' in the import and signication of baptism;' therefore seek the things which are above.' And again, Ye are dead, therefore mortify,' &c., ver. 3-5. Once more, ver. 8, 9, Put off

all these, seeing ye have put off the old man with his deeds.' And in many other places the apostle argueth from the baptismal engagement to the effect intended and signified thereby.

2. The improvement of baptism is the best preparation for the Lord's Supper: John xiii. 8, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.' That washing had a spiritual meaning; and presently after it the sacrament of Christ's body and blood was instituted, to the participation of which this spiritual washing was necessary. In the supposition, if I wash thee not, is implied baptism; in the commination, thou hast no part with me, is implied the Lord's Supper, which Christ was then about to institute. In foro ecclesiae, before the church, none but baptized persons have a right to the Lord's table; in foro coeli, before God, none but those who have the fruit of baptism have right to the benefits thereof; they that are sanctified by the Spirit of Christ have only right to the benefits purchased by his blood. Our Lord would remind his disciples of this before he would admit them to his table.

3. If we improve it not, our baptism will be a witness to solicit vengeance against us; as the gospel itself is preached either for a witness' to us, Mat. xxiv. 14, or for a witness' against us, if we obey it not, Mark xiv. 9. So baptism, instead of being a witness to us, will be a witness against us if we mind it not. And in the judgment we shall fare no better than the heathen; for all the difference between us is, that they are uncircumcised in flesh, and we in heart, Jer. ix. 25, 26; they are not washed in water, and we are not cleansed from our sins. I remember a passage in Victor Uticensis concerning one Elpidophorus, who had revolted from Catholicism to the Vandal Arians: the deacon who had baptized him showed him the stole, or linen clothes in which he was baptized, saying, Hae, te accusabunt cum majestas venerit judicantis,

&c.--O Elpidophorus! these shall be a witness against thee to all eternity, for thy just perdition, when the Judge cometh. What wilt thou do, wretch, when the people of God shall be admitted to the joys of heaven, and thyself thrust out? &c. If we have been baptized, and lived directly contrary to our baptismal vow, as if we were in covenant with the devil, the world, and the flesh, rather than with Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, what will become of us in the judgment?

But how shall we improve it?

First, We must personally and solemnly own the covenant made with God in infancy. Every one of us should choose the Lord for our sovereign lord and portion; and Christ Jesus for our Redeemer and Saviour; and the Holy Ghost for our guide, sanctifier, and comforter. Every one must personally thus engage himself to God; it is not enough that Christ engage for us as the common surety of all the elect, Heb. vii. 22. Something he did for us, and in our names; but every one must take a bond upon himself before he can have the benefit of it. You must yield up yourselves to the Lord, 2 Chron. xxx. 8. It is not enough that the church engage for us as a visible political body, or a community and society of men, who are in visible covenant with God and Christ: Ezek. xvi. 8, Thou enteredst into covenant with me, and becamest mine;' meaning it of the body of the church; but every individual person must also enter into covenant with God, and become his: Ezek. xx. 37, I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant.' Where there is an allusion to the sheep passing out of the fold when they were to be tithed for God, Lev. xxvii. 32; they were to be told with a rod, one, two, three, &c., and the tenth was the Lord's. God will not covenant with us in the lump and body, but every one was to be particularly minded of his duty; it is not enough that our parents did engage for us in baptism, as the Israelites, in the

name of their little ones, did avouch God to be their God, Deut. xxix. 10-12. No man can savingly transact this work for another, we must ratify the covenant in our own persons, and make our own professed subjection to the gospel of Christ, 2 Cor. ix. 13. This work cannot be done by a proxy or assigns; our parents' dedication will not profit us without some personal act of our own, if we live to years of discretion. Once more, this must be done not only in words, or visible external rites, which may signify so much as personal covenanting with God, but a man must engage his heart to God, Jer. xxx. 21. Yea, this is a business that must be done between God and our own souls, where no outward witnesses are conscious to it. God speaketh to the soul in this transaction, Ps. xxxv. 3, Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation;' and the soul speaketh to God, Lam. iii. 24, Thou art my portion, saith my soul;' and Ps. xvi. 2, O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my God;' thus the covenant is carried on in soul-language. Now upon this personal inward covenanting with God our right to all the privileges doth depend.

Secondly, Renew often the sense of your obligation to God, and keep a constant reckoning how you lay out yourselves for him: Acts xxvii. 23, His I am and him I serve;' Phil. i. 21, To me to live is Christ.' Some few renegades renounce their baptism, but most Christians forget their baptism: 2 Peter i. 9, He is blind, and cannot see afar off, and has forgotten that he was washed from his old sins;' therefore we should be continually exciting ourselves both to obedience and dependence, that the sincerity of our first vow and consent may be verified by a real and constant performance of it.

Thirdly, You should use frequent self-reflection, that you may come to know whether you are indeed washed from the guilt and filth of sin: 1 Cor. vi. 11, Such were some of you, but now ye are sanctified, but now

ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.' You should observe what further sense you have of the pardon of sin, how you get ground upon your bondage of spirit, and grow up into some rejoicing of faith, for by these signs God in tended our strong consolation, Heb. vi. 18; and the eunuch, when he was baptized, went his way rejoicing, Acts viii. 39. Hath God applied his covenant to me? taken me into the family? planted me into the mystical body of Christ? And shall not I be glad and rejoice in his salvation? So for sanctification, see whether God's interest doth prevail in you, or the interest of the flesh; what power and strength of will you get against corruption easily, Gal. v. 16, 17; whether sin be more subdued, and you can govern your passions and appetites better, Gal. v. 24. They that are Christ's should find some thing of this in themselves, otherwise their baptism is but an empty formality.

Fourthly and lastly, You must use it as a great help in all temptations; as when you are tempted to sin, either by the delights of sense: a Christian hath his answer ready, I am no debtor to the flesh; or, I am baptized, and dedicated to God in the way of mortification and holiness to obtain pardon and life, 1 Cor. vi. 15. Shall I take the members of Christ? &c. This soul, this body, this time, this strength is Christ's, not to please the flesh, but the Lord. Or by the terrors of sense. Dionysia comforted her son Majoricus, an African martyr, when he was going to suffer for owning the Godhead of Christ, with this speech: Memento, fili, te baptizatum esse in nomine Patris, Filii, et Spiritus Sancti--remember, my son, that thou art baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and be constant. So when you are tempted by the devil, taking advantage of your melancholy and grievous afflictions, to question God's love and mercy to penitent believers, remember the covenant sealed in baptism, that you may keep up your

faith in God through Christ, which pardoneth all your sins, and hath begotten us to a lively hope. We must expect to be tempted; the devil tempted Christ, after his baptism, to question his filiation so solemnly attested. Compare Mat. iii. 17, with Mat. iv. 16. Luther saith of himself, that when the devil tempted him to despair, or to any doubts and fears about the love of God or his mercy to sinners, he would always answer, Ecce ego baptizatus sum, et credo in Christum crucifixum--Behold, I am baptized, and believe in Christ crucified. And he telleth us also of a holy virgin who gave this reply when the devil abused her solitudes, and injected any despairing thoughts into her mind, Baptizata sum--I am baptized, and entered into God's covenant, and will expect the pardon of my sins by Jesus Christ.

Thus should we all the days of our life improve our baptism, till we have the full of that holy and happy estate, for which we were first purified and washed in God's laver.

Chapter 33

MAN'S IMPOTENCY TO HELP HIMSELF

OUT OF HIS MISERY.

MAN'S IMPOTENCY TO HELP HIMSELF OUT

OF HIS MISERY.

For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.--Rom. V. 6.

IN this chapter there are two parts: in the first, the apostle lays down the comfortable fruits and privileges of a justified estate; in the second, he argues the firmness of these comforts, because they are so rich that they are scarce credible, and hardly received. The firmness and soundness of these comforts the apostle representeth by a double comparison:--(1.) By comparing Christ with Christ; and (2.) Christ with Adam. Christ with Christ, or one benefit that we have by him with another, from the text to ver. 12; then Christ with Adam, the second Adam with the first, to the end of the chapter.

1. In comparing Christ with Christ, three considerations do occur:--

[1.] The efficacy of his love toward us before justification, with the efficacy of his love toward us after justification. The argument standeth thus: If Christ had a love to us when sinners, and his love prevailed with him to die for us, much more may we expect his love when made friends: if when we were in sin and misery, shiftless and helpless, Christ had the heart to die for us, and to take us with all our faults, will he cast us off after we are justified and accepted with God in him? This love of Christ is asserted in ver. 6, amplified in ver. 7 and 8, and the conclusion is inferred in ver. 9: Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.'

[2.] The second comparison is of the efficacy of the death of Christ, and the efficacy of the life of Christ. It is absurd to think that Christ rising from the dead, and living in heaven, should not be as powerful to save, and bring us to God, as Christ dying was to reconcile us to him.

[3.] The third comparison is the privative mercy, or being saved from hell, with the positive mercy, or obtaining a title to heaven: And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement,' ver. 11.

2. For the comparison between Christ and Adam, the sum of it is, that Christ is more able to save than Adam to destroy, and therefore justified persons need to fear nothing. As Adam was a public person, and root of mankind, so is Christ a public person; for Adam was tu'pos tou me'llontos, the figure of him that was to come,' ver. 14. Adam was a public person, but a finite person, having no intrinsic value in himself, and only was all us by divine institution; but Christ, beside the institution of God, was an infinite person, and therefore there is a pollo mallon, a much more,' upon Christ. His sacred virtue exceedeth that cursed influence of Adam in many particulars, amply set down in the latter end of the chapter by the apostle.

The words begin the first comparison. In them,--

1. The condition wherein we are by nature is set forth by two notions--ungodly, and without strength: the one noteth that we have no worth to move God to help us, for we were ungodly;' the other, that we have no power to help ourselves, for we were without strength:' we were without strength,' and so need help; ungodly,' and so refused help.

2. The means of our recovery, Christ died for us.

3. The seasonableness of our redemption, in due time.

For the first notion, whereby our natural estate is expressed,

ungodly,' I shall pass it by; the next notion, without strength,' will yield us this point:--

Doct. That man, fallen, is destitute of all power and means of rising again, or helping himself out of that misery into which he hath plunged himself by sin.

This will appear, if you consider his condition with respect to the law, or with respect to the gospel, and those terms of grace which God offers in Christ. The former more properly falls under the consideration of this place; but, because of the method of this exercise, you expect the discussion of the latter also, I shall take occasion from hence to speak of that.

First, With respect to the law. That will be understood by a view of that scripture that expresseth the tenor of the law: Cursed is every one that continueth not in all the words of this law to do them,' Gal. iii. 10; where is considerable,--

1. The duty it exacts.

2. The penalty it inflicts.

3. The operation that both these have upon the fallen creature.

1. The duty it exacts. An innocent nature, that is presupposed; for the person must continue.' It doth not say, now begin;' the sentence of the law doth not suppose man as lapsed and fallen, or as having already broken with God; but as in a good and sound estate. And then universal, perpetual, perfect obedience is indispensably required: he must continue in all things with all his heart, and that continually; if he fails in one point, he is gone. This is personally exacted of all men, as long as they abide under Adam's covenant: He that doeth them shall live in them;' and the soul that sinneth, it shall die,' Ezek. xviii. 4, xx. 11. Now if God should call us to an account for the most inoffensive day that ever we passed over, what would become of us? If

thou shouldest mark iniquities, Lord, who could stand?' [260] Ps. cxxx. 3. Better never born, than to be liable to that judgment, when the law shall take the sinner by the throat,' and say, Pay me that thou owest,' Mat. xviii. 28. What shall the poor wretch do? So that here we are without strength,' altogether un able to come up to the obedience of the law of works. The law can make nothing perfect, because it is become weak through our flesh.' Rom. viii. 3. To fallen man it establisheth a course of punishing sin, not of taking away sin: we may increase the debt, but we cannot lessen it. If our obedience were exact for the future (let us suppose it), yet the paying of new debts doth not quit old scores. They that could not keep themselves when entire and innocent, cannot recover themselves when lost and fallen.

2. The penalty it inflicts: Cursed is every one.' How cursed? Cursed in all that he hath, Deut. xxviii. 15-18. All his enjoyments become a snare, and temporal comforts do but harden him, and prepare him for a greater misery. Cursed in all that he doeth: his prayer is turned into sin; his hearing, the savour of death unto death;' all his toil and labour in outward service is to no purpose: The sacrifice of the wicked is abomination: how much more when he bringeth it with a wicked mind?' Prov. xxi. 27. At the best it is but an abomination.' God will not accept an offering at his hands; much more when it is polluted with sinful and evil aims. But this is not all; he is cursed for evermore: the law bindeth him over, body and soul, to everlasting torments; and in time he shall hear that dreadful sentence, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels,' Mat. xxv. 41. There is but the slender thread of a frail life that hinders the execution of this sentence upon him: a sinner stands upon the very brink of hell, and ever and anon is ready to be cast in; where he shall eternally lie under the wrath of God. So that here we are

without strength,' because we cannot satisfy the justice of God for one sin, but are always satisfying, and can never be said to have satisfied; like a poor man that pays a debt of a thousand pounds by a farthing a week.

3. Consider how this works with him. An exaction of duty under so severe a penalty doth either terrify or stupefy the conscience; he that escapeth the one suffereth the other; or else, thirdly, doth irritate corruption; or, fourthly, obtrude us upon a sottish despair, so as to give over all endeavours and hope of salvation.

First, Sometimes it terrifieth. That is easily done; the conscience of a sinner is a sore place; they are all their lifetime subject to bondage,' Heb. ii. 15. There is a hidden fear in the heart of a wicked man, not always felt, but soon awakened, either by a sound conviction from the word, or some sore judgment, or by the agonies of death, or serious thoughts of the world to come. Felix trembled when Paul did but mention God's judgment,' Acts xxi v. 25; the prisoner makes the judge tremble. A sinner is afraid to think of his condition, if God do but a little break in upon his heart: do what he can, he lies under the bondage of a wounded spirit, and wherever he goes, like the devils, he carrieth his own hell about with him.

Secondly, If it terrifieth not the conscience, it stupefieth the conscience, that they grow senseless of their misery, past feeling,' Eph. iv. 19. And that is a dangerous crisis and estate of soul, when once a man comes to that, and goeth like a fool to the correction of the stocks.

Thirdly, It irritateth their inbred corruption: The commandment came,' that is, in full conviction and power, and sin revived, and I died.' Rom. vii. 9. The more we understand of the necessity of our subjection to God, the more opposite is the soul to him; as a dam makes a river or

strong stream the more violent, or as a bullock at the first yoking becometh the more unruly. Or,

Fourthly, It breedeth a sottish despair: There is no hope; therefore we will walk after our own devices, and do every one according to the evil imaginations of our own heart,' Jer. xviii. 12. It is to no purpose to speak to us, or strive further about us; as if they had said, There is no hope; and therefore we will live as we list, without any further care of turning to God. This is the worst kind of despair, when a man is given up to his own heart's lust,' Ps. lxxxi. 12, and runneth headlong in the way of destruction, without hope of returning. There is more hope of them that are under despairing fears or a terrified conscience than there is of those who are under despairing resolutions or a stupid and sottish obstinacy. Thus as to the law, man is helpless.

Secondly, Consider man as to terms of grace offered in the gospel. He is still without strength;' not only in a damnable condition by the law, but, without grace, unable to accept the gospel. This will appear by two considerations:--

1. By those emphatical terms of scripture by which the case and cure of man are set forth.

2. By those positive assertions whereby all power is denied to man to convert himself to God, or to do anything that is spiritually good.

1. Those emphatical expressions which represent his case and his cure.

[1.] His case. The scripture sets forth man's condition thus: that he is born in sin, Ps. li. 5; and things natural are not easily altered. Greedy of sin: He drinketh in iniquity like water,' Job xv. 16; it noteth a vehement propension, as greedy to sin as a thirsty man to drink. Thirst is the most implacable appetite; hunger is far better borne. But this, you will say, is but now and then, in a great temptation or vehement passion. No; Every imagination of the thoughts

of his heart is' evil, only evil,' and that continually,' Gen. vi. 5.

By how many aggravating and increasing circumstances is man's sin there set forth! There is in him a mint always at work: his mind coining evil thoughts, his heart evil desires, and carnal motions; and his memory is the closet and storehouse wherein they are kept. But may not a man be reclaimed? is not this his bondage and trouble? No; his heart is a heart of stone, Ezek. xxxvi. 26; that is, inflexible, insensible. When God useth the word, some common motions of his Spirit, some rousing providences, yet all is in vain; for man's heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked,' Jer. xvii. 9; inventing shifts and excuses to avoid God, and to cheat itself of its own happiness. But is not the New Testament more favourable than the Old? or is not man grown better, since there was so much grace discovered? I answer--No; there is a perfect harmony between the Testaments; there you will find man represented as a child of wrath by nature,' Eph. ii. 3, even the elect as well as others to be a servant of sin.' Rom. vi. 17. Never such an imperious master, never such a willing servant: sin never leaveth commanding, and we love the work. You will find him again expressed as one averse from God, alienated from his life,' Eph. iv. 18. It is a melancholy thought to a carnal heart to think of the life of God. As an enemy to the law, Rom. viii. 7; one that neither can nor will please God. As blind,' and knoweth not what to do, 2 Peter i. 9: and this blindness spiritual is worse than bodily. A man that is blind in body seeketh for a fit guide; as Elymas, when he was stricken blind, sought about for one to lead him by the hand,' Acts xiii. 11. As weak and without strength,' here in the text; yea, stark dead in trespasses and sins,' Eph. ii. 1-5; yea, worse than dead: a dead man doeth no more hurt, his evil dieth with him; but there is a life of resistance and rebellion against God that goeth along with this death in sin. Now, put

all this together, and you may spell out man's misery, what a wretched, impotent creature he is in his natural estate. The scripture does not speak this by glances or short touches; neither is it a hyperbole used once or twice, but everywhere, where it professedly speaks of this matter. Certainly man contributeth little to his own conversion: he cannot hunger and thirst' after Christ that drinks in iniquity like water;' there is nothing in nature to carry him to grace who is altogether sinful. If the scripture had only said that man had accustomed himself to sin, and was not born in sin;' that man was somewhat prone to iniquity, and not greedy' of it; and did often think evil, and not continually;' that man was somewhat obstinate, and not a stone,' an adamant;' if the scripture had only said that man was indifferent to God, and not a professed enemy;' if a captive of sin, and not a servant;' if only weak, and not dead;' if only a neuter, and not a rebel;'--then there might be something in man, and the work of conversion not so difficult. But the scripture saith the quite contrary.

[2.] The cure. Certainly to remedy so great an evil requires an almighty power, and the all-sufficiency of grace; therefore it is good to see how conversion is described in scripture. Sometimes by enlightening the mind: And the eyes of your understandings being enlightened,' &c., Eph. i. 18. Man, the wisest creature on this side heaven, is stark blind in the things of God. Though he hath the light of nature, and can put on the spectacles of art, and dress his notions of divine things by the glass of the word, yet ere the cure is wrought, something must be done upon the faculty: the eyes of our understandings must be en lightened, as well as the object revealed. Ay! but this infusion of light is not all; the scripture speaks of opening the heart: He opened the heart of Lydia,' Acts xvi. 14. God doth not only

knock at the heart, but open it. He knocks many times by the outward means, but finds no entrance. Yea, as one that would open a door,--he tries key after key, till he hath tried all the keys in the bunch; so does God use means after means; but till he putteth his fingers upon the handles of the lock, Cant. v. 4, 5, the door is not opened to him. Well, then, the mind must be enlightened, and the heart opened. If these words are not emphatical enough, you will find conversion expressed by regeneration: Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God,' John iii. 3. Mark, we must not only be reformed, but regenerated. Now because generation is an ordinary work of nature, and often falls out in the course of second causes, therefore it is expressed by the metaphor of resurrection, Eph. ii. 5. But that which hath been may be again; therefore it is called a creation: We are' poi'ema autou, his workmanship,' Eph. ii. 10; 2 Cor. iv. 6, v. 17; Ps. li. 10. Yea, further it is expressed by victory, 1 John iv. 4; or the beating and binding of the strong man,' by one that is stronger than he,' Luke xi. 21, 22; by bringing into captivity every proud thought,' 2 Cor. x. 5. All these expressions doth the scripture use to set out the mystery of grace. One expression may not enough be heeded, and therefore are many types and figures of it used, that what is wanting in one notion may be supplied by another. As let us gather them up a little. There must be not only light in the mind, but the heart must be moved; and that not a little stirred, but changed, fashioned anew, born again. And because generation supposeth a previous disposition in the matter, not only is it called regeneration,' but the term resurrection' is used, in which the matter is wholly unprepared. But yet because still here is matter to work upon, therefore it is called creation, which was a making all things out of nothing. God works faith where there is no faith, and repentance where was no repentance; and calleth

the things that are not as though they were.' But now because sin makes us worse than nothing, and as in creation, as there was nothing to help, so there was nothing to resist and hinder, therefore it is expressed by victory; implying the opposition of God's work, and the resistance that there is in the heart of man till it be overpowered by grace.

2. The next proof is from those assertions whereby all power is denied to man to convert himself to God, or to do anything that is spiritually good. As when it is said he cannot know, 1 Cor. ii. 14; he cannot believe, John vi. 44; he cannot obey, Rom. viii. 7. Nay, to instance in single acts: he cannot think a good thought of himself, 2 Cor. iii. 5; he cannot speak a good word: How can ye, being evil, speak good things?' Mat. xii. 34. He cannot do anything, John xv. 5. He doth not say, nihil magnum, but nihil; not no great thing,' but Without me ye can do nothing' Well, then, when man can neither know, nor believe, nor obey, nor think, nor speak, nor do anything without grace, surely man is without strength,' wholly impotent and unable to turn himself to God.

Obj. 1. But here is an objection: If it be so, how can these things stand with the mercy of God, as the Creator of mankind, to require the debt of him that is not able to pay? with the justice of God, as the judge of the world, to punish him with eternal death for the neglect of that which he could not perform? or with the wisdom of the supreme lawgiver, to exhort him by promises who hath no power to do what he is exhorted unto?

Ans. 1. I answer--to the first--God doth not lose his right, though man hath lost his power; their impotency doth not dissolve their obligation; a drunken servant is a servant, and it is against all reason that the master should lose his right to command by the

servant's default. A prodigal debtor, that hath nothing to pay, yet is liable to be sued for the debt without any injustice. God contracted with us in Adam; and that obedience which he requireth is not only due by covenant, but by law; not only by positive law and contract, but by immutable right. It is harsh, men think, to suffer for Adam's fault, to which they were not conscious and actually consenting; but every man will find an Adam in his own heart: the old man is there, wasting away the few remains of natural light and strength. And shall not God challenge the debt of obedience from a debtor that is both proud and prodigal? We are proud; for when we are miserable, we think ourselves happy; and when we are poor, we think ourselves rich; and when we are blind, we conceit ourselves very seeing; and when we are naked, we think ourselves well clad, Rev. iii. 17. And therefore God may admonish us of our duty, and demand his right; if for no other reason but to show us our impotency, and that we may not pretend that we were not called upon for what we owe. And as man is proud, so he is prodigal. We spend what is left, and throw away those relics of conscience and moral inclinations which escaped out of the ruins of the fall.

Ans. 2. As to the second, how God can with justice punish him for the neglect of what he could not do, I answer--Our natural impotency is voluntary. We must not consider man only as impotent to good, but as delighting in evil, and loving it with all his heart. As man can not, so he will not, come to God, John v. 40. Our impotency lies in our obstinacy, and so man is left without excuse. We refuse the grace that is offered to us, and by continuing in sin, increase our bondage, our inveterate customs turning to another nature.

Ans. 3. As to the last, how God can exhort and persuade us, for answer, suppose we should say--This is only for the elect's sake, who certainly are the called according to purpose.' Rom. viii. 28; whereas others are

called obiter, by the by,' and as they live intermingled with them. If the elect did dwell alone, and were a distinct community by themselves, the objection were plausible; but they are hidden amongst others, and therefore the reprobate have the like favour in the external means with them. The world standeth for the elect's sake, yet the sun doth not shine upon them alone, nor the showers fall upon their fields alone. Or let me illustrate it thus: The sun shineth, though blind men see it not; the rain falls upon the rocks and mountains, as well as the fruitful valleys: so are exhortations of duty promiscuously tendered to good and bad. This might be answer enough; but that which I rather say is, that these exhortations have their use; for they carry their own blessing with them, to them to whom God means them for good. The word has a ministerial subserviency to the power of God; as when Christ said, Lazarus, come forth,' it raised him. out of his grave. As for others that are not converted by them, it is for their conviction, and to bridle their fierceness, and a means to civilise them, and keep them from growing worse, whereby many temporal blessings do accrue to them; as Pagan Rome flourished in all manner of virtue and success as long as moral precepts were in force. But of this more in the next objection.

Obj. 2. If man be so altogether without strength, why do ye press him to the use of means?

Ans. I answer--Though man cannot change himself, yet he is to use the means; and that for several reasons:--

1. That we may practically see our own weakness. Men think the work of grace is easy, till they put themselves upon a trial: the lameness of the arm is found in exercise: Apply thy heart to understanding,' then cry for knowledge,' Prov. ii. 2, 3. Whosoever sets himself in good earnest to get any grace, will be forced to cry for it before he hath done. We never seek strength at God's hands in so feeling a manner,

till our experience convince us of our weakness. When a man goes to lift up a piece of timber heavy above his strength, he is forced to call in help.

2. The use of the means we owe to God, as well as the change of the heart. We lie under a moral obligation to use them. God, that hath required faith and conversion, hath required prayer, hearing, reading, meditating; and we are bound to obey, though we know not what good will come of it: as Abraham obeyed God, not knowing whither he went,' Heb. xi. 8; and Peter, when there was little hope, saith, Howbeit, at thy command,' &c., Luke v. 5. Our great rule is, we are to do what he commandeth, and let God do what he will.

3. To lessen our guilt. For when men do not use the means, they have no excuse: it is plain laziness and want of will, not want of power, when we will not so much as try to come out of our condition; we love our bondage, and shut the door upon ourselves; or, as that phrase, judge ourselves unworthy of eternal life,' Acts xiii. 46; pass sentence upon our own souls. It is a sign we care not whether God show us mercy, yea, or no; for you will not so much as bestow a thought upon it; you come under the censure of wicked and slothful servants, Mat. xxv. 26.

4. There is encouragement in the use of means many ways.

[1.] If we do not something, we shall grow worse. Standing pools are apt to putrefy. Man is of an active nature, either growing better or worse: when we do not improve nature, we deprave it: They corrupt themselves in what they know naturally,' Jude 10. Voluntary neglects draw on penal hardness; and so your impotency is in creased. There is this benefit of using means--it prevents much sin and hardness of heart: it is like the embalming of a dead body; it keeps it from stinking, though it does not restore life.

[2.] Without the use of means they can never hope for anything: How

shall they believe without a preacher?' Rom. x. 14. If ever I meet with God, with Christ, it must be in this way; it is good to lie at the pool, as the poor man did who was unable to get in when the angel stirred the waters, John v. 3-5. Marriage is instituted for the propagation of mankind, yet the soul is of God only. No man abstaineth from marriage because he cannot beget a reasonable soul. So grace is of God; but hearing, reading, praying, are the instituted means; and we must not abstain from these means because grace is not of ourselves, but God.

[3.] It may be God will meet with us. It is the ordinary practice of his free grace so to do; and it is good to make trial upon a common hope: Pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee,' Acts viii. 22. There is a great uncertainty, yet pray; it is God's usual way to meet with them that seek him: 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, 3 Luke xi. 8: for his importunity's sake.' dia` te`n anai'deian, for his impudence,' [261] God is not engaged; but who knows what importunity may do? He may, and he may not, give grace; but usually he doth. It is God's usual way to bless man's industry; and yet all they that labour have not an absolute certainty of success. Who would forbear ploughing, because in one year of ten there may happen a dearth or a lean harvest? Act; God may come in (for usually he doth) with his influence and blessing.

Let me now give you some reasons why God permits this weakness and want of strength to lie upon the fallen creature.

1. To exalt the freeness and power of his grace. First, The freeness of his grace; for God hath shut up all under the curse, that there may be no way of escape but by his mercy; their eternal ruin and damnation is

else certain and inevitable: God hath concluded them all under unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.' Rom. xi. 32. Sune'kleise, that is the word: the state of unbelief is there compared to a prison, made sure and fast with iron bars and bolts; and by God's permission man hath shut up' himself in such a prison that mercy alone might open the door to him. Jew and Gentile lie fast bound with a chain that can be loosened by no hand but God's. So, Gal. iii. 22: The scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe:' it is the same word and notion: we may mourn and sigh through the grates of the flaming prison, but can never get out till God look upon us in mercy through Christ. And so also the power of his grace in rescuing us out of this misery: it is a mighty power that works in them that believe, Eph. i. 19. When we consider it, we may wonder at it that ever such a change should be wrought in us that are so carnal, so obstinate: Who hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light,' 1 Peter ii. 9. It is indeed marvellous that ever we should get out of the prison of sin; more miraculous than Peter's getting out of prison, having so many chains, and doors, and keepers upon him, Acts xii.

2. To humble the creature thoroughly by a sense of his own guilt, un worthiness, and nothingness. In our natural state we are ungodly' and without strength.' Why has God permitted it? That every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God,' upo'dikos to Theo, Rom. iii. 19, liable to the process of his revenging justice; and so to humble us for our inability and obstinacy, that we may go complainingly to God, saying, Lord, I am as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke,' Jer. xxxi. 18. Whosoever hath passed this trial, doth sensibly find it.

Use of all.

1. To the unconverted,--to be sensible of their condition, and mourn over it to God. Acknowledge the debt; confess your impotency; beg pardon and grace; and, in a humble sense of your misery, endeavour earnestly to come out of it. By such doctrines as these men are either cut at heart,' Acts vii. 54, or pricked at heart,' Acts ii. 37, which is the far more kindly work. Some men's hearts and lusts are exasperated; and they rage and storm when they are warned of their danger by a closer application. Oh! it is better to bemoan yourselves, than fret against the Lord, and yield to a sottish despair. There is some hope when conviction ends in groaning rather than murmuring; and you do not fret against the Lord's sovereignty, but complain to him of the naughtiness of your hearts, begging his grace for Christ's sake. Therefore go and lie at his feet, and say, Lord, I have a blind mind, a froward heart; none more. I shall never of myself fly the evil forbidden, perform the good commanded, renounce these bewitching lusts, take up such a course of service to thy blessed majesty. Oh! take away this stony, untractable heart! &c. You are in prison, but you are prisoners of hope,' if you do so.

2. To press the converted to thankfulness. We were once in such a pitiful case, till God plucked us as brands out of the burning; we were utterly miserable and destitute of all good. Oh! blessed be God, that opened the prison-door, and proclaimed deliverance by Christ to poor captives; and not only proclaimed it, but wrought it for us: none but an Almighty arm could loosen the bolts, and shoot back the many locks that were upon us. Peter, when the angel made his chains fall off, considered' the matter, Acts xii. 12, and went to give thanks among the saints. Oh! when there were so many doors and bolts upon you, such difficulties and disadvantages in the way of your conversion, consider it, and bless God for your escape: Blessed be the Lord, that gave me

counsel in my reins,' Ps. xvi. 7.

3. Let us compassionate others that are in this estate. Poor souls! in what a sad condition are they! We have not usually such a deep sense of their misery as we should have. Israel was to pity strangers, because they were once strangers in the land of Egypt: we ourselves have been in the house of bondage. Oh! pity poor captive souls. Especially doth this concern the ministry; they that do induere personam Christi, that stand in the stead of Christ,' should induere viscera Christi, put on the bowels of Christ:' God is my record how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Christ Jesus,' Phil. i. 8. When we were ungodly,' and without strength, Christ died for' sinners; and wilt not thou labour for them, and employ thy talent to edification? Oh! if we had more weighty thoughts about the worth and danger of souls, we would not do the Lord's work so sleepily as usually we do; but as co-workers with God,' we would beseech you with all earnestness not to receive the grace of God in vain,' 2 Cor. vi. 1. Every advantage should be taken hold of: as a sinking, perishing man, if it be but a bough in the waters, catcheth at it, so should we press you to improve all closer applications and ministerial helps, and that with compassion and tenderness, as having ourselves been acquainted with the heart of a poor, impotent, captive sinner.

[260] That is, rectus in curiâ--be able to make a bold defence.

[261] And so fitly expressing our restlessness in the use of means.

Chapter 34

THE SCRIPTURE SUFFICIENT WITHOUT

UNWRITTEN TRADITIONS.

THE SCRIPTURE SUFFICIENT WITHOUT

UNWRITTEN TRADITIONS.

PROPOSITION.--THE SCRIPTURE IS A SUFFICIENT RULE OF CHRISTIAN FAITH, OR A RECORD OF ALL NECESSARY CHRISTIAN DOCTRINES, WITHOUT ANY SUPPLEMENT OF UNWRITTEN TRADITIONS, AS CONTAINING ANY NECESSARY MATTER OF FAITH, AND IS THUS FAR SUFFICIENT FOR THE DECISION OF ALL CONTROVERSIES.

Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word or our epistle.--2 Thes. II. 15.

THE apostle, after he had comforted the Thessalonians, he exhorteth them to constancy in the truth, whatever temptations they had to the contrary. The comforts he propoundeth to them were taken--(1.) From their election, ver. 13; (2.) From their vocation, ver. 14. His exhortation is to perseverance, therefore, brethren, &c.

In the words observe:--

1. The illative particle therefore, because God hath chosen you and called you, and given you such advantages against error and seduction.

2. The duty inferred, ste'kete, stand fast; it is a military word; you have the same in other places: 1 Cor. xvi. 13, Watch ye, stand ye fast,' &c; Eph. vi. 14, Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth.' The word intimateth perseverance.

3. The means of perseverance, hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word or our epistle.

Where observe:--(1.) The act; (2.) The object.

[1.] The act, krateite, hold with strong hand; the word implieth a forcible, holding against assaults, whether of error or persecution.

The Thessalonians were assaulted in both kinds; the heathens persecuted them, and some were gone abroad that began the mystery of iniquity, and were ready to pervert them.

[2.] The object; which is propounded--(1.) By a common and general term, the traditions which ye have been taught. (2.) By a distribution, whether by word or our epistle.

First, The common and general term, the traditions which ye have been taught. There are two sorts of traditions--human and divine.

1. Human traditions are certain external observances instituted by men, and delivered from hand to hand, from progenitors to their posterity; these may be either beside or contrary to the word of God. (1.) Beside the word; as the institutions of the family of the Rechabites, in the observance of which, from father to son, they were so exact and punctual that God produceth their example to shame the disobedience of his people: Jer. xxxv. 6, 7, Jonadab, the son of Rechab, our father, commanded us, saying, Ye shall drink no wine, nor build houses, nor plant vineyards,' &c. (2.) Contrary to the word of God; such as were those of the Pharisees, Mat. xv. 2, Why transgress ye the commandment of God by your tradition?' Human inventions in religion are contrary to, and destructive of, divine laws.

2. Traditions divine are either heavenly doctrines revealed by God, or institutions and ordinances appointed by him for the use of the church. These are the rule and ground of our faith, worship, and obedience. The whole doctrine of the gospel is a tradition delivered and conveyed to us by fit messengers, such as the apostles were: 1 Cor. xi. 2, Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances,' marg.--traditions, as I delivered them to you.' So that holding the traditions is nothing else but perseverance in apostolical doctrine.

Second, Distribution; that no cheat might be put upon them under any pretence, therefore he saith, whether by word or our epistle; that is, by word of mouth when present, or by epistle when absent; and he saith not epistles, but epistle, as alluding to the former wrote unto them. They were bound to yield to both alike credence and obedience, for, whether in speaking or writing, the apostolical authority was the same. To improve this verse for your benefit, I shall lay down several propositions.

Prop. 1. That whatever assurance we have of God's preserving us in the truth, yet we are bound to use diligence and caution; for the apostle had said that God had chosen and called them to the belief of the truth, and yet saith, therefore, brethren, stand fast. First, reason will tell us--(1.) That when we intend an end we must use the means, otherwise the bare intention and desire would suffice, and to the accomplishing of any effect we need no more than to will it; and then the sluggard would be the wisest man in the world, who is full of wishings and wouldings, though his hands refuse to labour; but common experience showeth that the end cannot be obtained without a diligent use of the means: Prov. xiii. 4, The soul of the sluggard desireth and hath nothing, but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat;' that is, rewarded with the intended benefit. (2.) The business in hand is, whether God's election, calling, or promise doth so secure the end to us, as that we need not be so careful in the diligent use of means. Such a notion or conceit there may be in the hearts of men, therefore let us attack it a little by these considerations.

1. God's decree is both of ends and means, for all his purposes are executed by fit means. He that hath chosen us to salvation bringeth it about by the belief of the truth and sanctification of the Spirit, 2 Thes. ii. 13; and without faith and holiness no man shall see God and

escape condemnation. God had assured Paul, that there should be no loss of any man's life among them, except of the ship,' Acts xxvii. 22; and yet afterward, ver. 31, Paul telleth them, Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved.' How could that assurance given to Paul from God, and Paul's caution to the mariners, stand together? Doth the purpose of God depend upon the uncertain will and actions of men? I answer--Not as a cause, from whence it receiveth its force and strength, but as a means, appointed also by God, to the execution of his decree, for, by the same decree, God appointeth the event what he will do, and the means by which he will have it done; and the Lord revealing by his word the conjunction of ends and means, there is a necessity of duty lying upon man to use these means, and not to expect the end without them. God intended to save all in the ship, and yet the mariners must abide in the ship; therefore, what God hath joined together let no man separate. If we separate these things God doth not change his counsel, but we pervert his order to our own destruction.

2. God, that hath bidden us to believe his promises, hath forbidden us to tempt his providence, Mat. iv. 7. Now we tempt God when we desire him to give an extraordinary proof of his care over us, when ordinary means will serve the turn or be useful to us.

3. Though the means seem to have no connection with the end, yet, if God hath enjoined them for that end, we must use them. As in the instance of Namaan, God was resolved to cure him; but Namaan must take his prescribed way, though against his own fancy and conceit: 2 Kings v. 10, Wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again unto thee, and thou shalt be clean.' Compare ver. 13, If the prophet had bidden thee to do some great thing,' &c. So John xiii. 6, 7, Peter must submit to be washed, though he could not see the benefit of it. So John ix. 6, 7, the blind man must submit to have his eyes anointed with

clay, and wash in the pool of Siloam; though the clay seemed to put out his eyes rather than cure them, and the pool could not wash away his blindness: but means appointed by God must be used, whatever improbabilities are apprehended by us.

4. That when God's will is expressly declared concerning the event, yet he will have the means used; as, for instance, 2 Kings xx. 5-7, God was absolutely resolved to add fifteen years more to Hezekiah's life, yet he must take a lump of figs and lay it on the boil;' which plainly showeth that no promise on God's part, nor assurance on ours, hindereth the use of means; God will work by them, not without them.

5. In spiritual things assurance of the event is an encouragement to industry, not a pretence to sloth: 1 John ii. 27, 28, Ye shall abide in him; and now, little children, abide in him.' The promise of perseverance doth encourage us to use endeavours, that we may persevere, and quicken diligence, rather than nourish security, or open a gap to carnal liberty: 1 Cor. ix. 26, I run, not as one that is uncertain;' we are the more earnest, because we are assured the means shall not be ineffectual.

Prop. 2. Our duty is to stand fast in the faith of Christ and profession of godliness, whatever temptations we have to the contrary. Stand fast being a military word, it alludeth to a soldier's keeping his ground, and is opposed to two things:--(1.) A cowardly flight; (2.) A treacherous revolt,

1. A cowardly flight implieth our being overcome in the evil day by the many afflictions that befall us for the truth's sake: Eph. vi. 13, Wherefore take to you the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, that after you have done all things ye may stand.' Their temptation was the many troubles and persecutions that befell them, called there the evil day. Their defence lay in the whole

armour of God, which is there made of six pieces--the girdle of truth or sincerity, which is a strength to us as a girdle to the loins; the breastplate of righteousness, or a holy inclination and desire to perform our duty to God in all things; and the shield of faith, or a steadfast adhering to the truths of the gospel, whether delivered in a way of command, promise, or threatening; the helmet of hope, or a certain and desirous expectation of the promised glory; the shoe of the preparation of the gospel of peace, which is a readiness to endure all encounters for Christ's sake, who hath made our peace with God; and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Now, if we take this armour and use it in our conflicts, what doth it serve for? To withstand and stand; the first is the act of a soldier, the second is the posture of a conqueror; here is withstanding till the field be won, and then standing when the day of evil is over. Here we make our way to heaven by conflict and conquest, and here after we triumph.

2. A treacherous revolt, or yielding to the enemy by complying with those things which are against the interests of Christ and his kingdom for advantage sake: 2 Tim. iv. 10, Demas hath forsaken us, and loved the present world.' Backsliders in heart are the worst sort of apostates, such as lose their affection to God, and delight in his ways, and esteem of his glorious recompenses, for a little pleasure, profit, or pomp of living;' sell the birthright for one morsel of meat,' Heb. xii. 15, 16. Some fail in their understandings, but most miscarry by the perverse inclination of their wills; they are carnal, worldly hypocrites that never thoroughly mortified the fleshly mind; prize things as they are commodious to the flesh, and will save them from sufferings. The bias of such men's hearts doth easily prevail against the light of their understandings.

Prop. 3. The means of standing fast is by holding the traditions which

were taught by the holy apostles. Here I will prove:--(1.) That the doctrine of Christianity taught by the apostles is a tradition. (2.) That holding this tradition by strong hand when others would wrest it from us is the means of. our perseverance.

1. That the doctrine of Christianity is a tradition. I prove it by two arguments.

[1.] Matters not evident by the light of nature, nor immediately revealed to us by God, must be either an invention or a tradition. An invention is something in religion not evident by natural light nor agreeable to sound reason, but is some cunningly devised fable, invented by one or more, and obtruded by various artifices upon the belief of the world. Inventions in this kind were man's disease, not his remedy: Eccles. vii. 29, God made man upright, but they sought out many inventions.' As when the philosophers sat abrood upon religion, a goodly chimera it was they hatched and brought forth: Rom. i. 21, 22, They became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened, and professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.' These inventions little became the nature of God; nor were they profitable to man, for still the great sore of nature was unhealed, which is a fear of death, and the righteous wrath of God, Rom. i. 32, so that neither man's comfort nor duty was well provided for. Surely the. gospel is none of this sort; not an invention of man, but a revelation of God; and a revelation not made to us in person, but brought out of the bosom of God by Jesus Christ, and by him manifested to chosen witnesses who might publish this mystery and secret to others. Well, then, since the gospel is not an invention it is a tradition, or a delivery of the truth upon the testimony of one that came from God to instruct the world, or reduce it to him; not an invention of man, but a secret brought out of the bosom of God by our

Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore it is said, Heb. ii. 3, 4, How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation; first spoken by the Lord himself, and then confirmed to us by them that heard him, the Lord bearing them witness?' &c. Christ delivered it to the apostles, and the apostles delivered it to others: 2 Tim. ii. 2, Those things which thou hast heard from me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.' The apostles received the gospel from, Christ, and the churches and ministers from the apostles, and then delivered it down to others, until it came to us; which is the means of our believing the truth, and confessing the name of Christ. This testimony, delivered and conveyed to us by the most credible means, and which we have no reason to doubt of, is as binding as if we had heard Christ and his apostles in person; for we have their word in writing; though we did not hear them preach and publish it with the lively voice, their authority is the same delivered either way. And that these are their writings appeareth by the constant tradition of the church, and the acknowledgment of friends and enemies, who still appeal to them as a public authentic record; and, as they have been attested by the church, they have been owned by God, and blessed by him to the converting and sanctifying of many souls throughout all succession of ages. And by this tradition Christianity hath held up the head against all encounters of time, and the persecutions of adverse powers have not suppressed it, nor the disputes of enemies silenced the profession of it; but from age to age it hath been received and transmitted to future generations, though sometimes at a very dear rate. And this is binding to us, though we saw not the persons and miracles by which they confirmed their message, and heard not the first report. Yet the universal tradition having handed it to us is a sufficient ground of faith, and so we believe through their

word, and are concerned in Christ's prayers, John xvii. 20, for with them and their successors (as to these necessary things) Christ hath promised to be to the end of the world, Mat. xxviii. 20.

[2.] My next argument is, because Christian religion must needs be a tradition, partly because matter of fact is the foundation of it, and it is in itself matter of faith. (1.) Because it is built upon matter of fact, that the Son of God came from God to bring us to God; that is to say, appeared in human nature, instructed the world by his doctrine and example, and at length died for sinners, confirming both in life and death the truth of his mission by such unquestionable miracles as showed him to be the Son of God and the Saviour of the world. Now, a testimony, tradition, or report is necessary in matters of fact, which of necessity must be confined to some determinate time and place. It was not fit that Christ should be always working miracles, always dying, always rising and ascending, in every place, and in the view of every man; but these things were to be once done, in one place of the world, in the sight of some particular and competent witnesses; but, because the knowledge of them concerned all the rest of the world, they were by them to be attested to others; matters of fact can only be proved by credible witnesses, and this was the great office put upon the apostles, Acts i. 8, xxi. 22, ii. 32, iii. 15, x. 39, 40, 41. (2.) As it is matter of faith, or the doctrine built upon this matter of fact. We cannot properly be said to believe a thing but upon report and testimony. I may know a thing by sense or reason, but I cannot believe it but as it is affirmed or brought to me by credible testimony. As we are said to see those things which we perceive by the eye, or the sense of seeing, and to know those things which we receive by reason, or sure demonstration, so we are said to believe those things which are brought to us by valuable testimony, tradition, and report. As, for instance,

if any one ask you, Do you believe the sun shineth at noon day? you will answer--I do not believe it, but see it. So if any one ask you--Do you believe that twice two make four, and twice three make six? you will say--I do not believe it. but know it, because certain and evident reason telleth me that two is the half of four, and three of six, and every whole consisteth of two halves or moieties. But if he should ask you--Do you believe that the sun is bigger than the earth? you will say--I believe it; for though your eye doth not discover it, nor doth an ignorant man know any certain demonstration of it, yet having the authority of learned men, who are competent judges in the case, you judge it a rash and foolish obstinacy not to believe it. Apply it now to the mysteries of godliness revealed in the gospel: they cannot be seen by the eye, for they are invisible; nor found out and comprehended by any human understanding, because they exceed the reach of man's reason, and depend upon the love and arbitrary will of God, John iii. 16. Yet you believe them, because God hath revealed them to the prophets and apostles; and God, being truth and wisdom itself, cannot deceive or be deceived; and, therefore, you believe them with the certainty of divine faith, and do no more doubt of them than you do of those things which you see with your eyes, and know and understand by a sure demonstration. The sense of seeing may be deceived, and human reason may err, but it is impossible God should deceive or be deceived. It oftentimes falleth out that men do prefer the authority and report of a man whom they judge to be wise and good before their own sense and reason; as, for instance, that man who by his eye judgeth the sun to be less than the earth, yet doth not obstinately stand in his opinion, when he heareth a knowing and skilful philosopher assert the contrary. Now, if we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater,' 1 John v. 9. And this testimony of God is brought to us by his

authorised messengers as the ground of faith, and what is that but tradition? We believe in God by hearing of him, and we hear by a preacher.' Rom. x. 14. Ordinary preachers declare his mind to us, but the extraordinary confirm it; the common preachers give us notice, but Christ and his apostles give us assurance; and by their testimony and tradition, our faith is ultimately resolved into the veracity of God.
2. That holding this tradition is the great means of standing fast in the faith of Christ, and the confession of his name; for in the word of God, delivered by Christ and his apostles, there is sure direction to walk by, and sure promises to build upon. For whatever they made known of Christ was not a fable, but a certain truth; for they had the testimony of sense, 2 Peter i. 16, 17, 1 John i. 1-4, and so could plead both the authority of his command and the certainty of his promise, and that with uncontrollable evidence; and without this revelation there can be neither faith nor obedience, nor sure expectation of happiness. For we cannot trust God for what he hath not promised, nor obey God in what he hath not commanded; nor in our difficulties and distresses expect happiness from him without his war rant and assurance. But by this doctrine delivered to us, we have all that belongeth to faith, obedience, and happiness, and beyond that the creature can desire no more. (1.) There can be no faith till we have a sure testimony of God's revelation, for faith is a believing such things as God hath revealed because he hath revealed them. It is not faith but fancy to believe such things as God hath never revealed, nor is it trust and a regular confidence to think that he will certainly give us what he hath never promised; this were to lay us open to all manner of delusion; and therefore we are never upon sure and stable ground but by sticking to such a tradition as may justly entitle itself to God. (2.) Nor obedience, for obedience is a doing what God hath

commanded because he hath commanded it. The fundamental reason of obedience is the sight of God's will, 1 Thes. iv. 3, v. 18, 1 Peter ii. 15. To do what God never commanded, or not to do it upon that account, but for other reasons, is not obedience; and in difficult cases the soul can never be held to its duty till we are persuaded that so is God's will concerning us. Now, to know his will concerning us, we are often bidden to search the scriptures, but never bidden to consult with the church, to know what unwritten tradition? she hath in her keeping to instruct us in our duty. (3.) No certain expectation of happiness. We are never safe till we know by what rule Christ will judge us; that is, reward or punish men at the last day. Now, he will judge us according to the gospel.' Rom. ii. 16, 1 Thes. i. 8. Obey the gospel, and you have a perfect rule to guide you to happiness; but if you neglect this great salvation, or be unfaithful in the profession of it, this word condemneth you, and God will ratify the sentence of it.

Prop. 4. That whilst the apostles were in being, there were two ways of delivering the truth, and that was by word of mouth and writing. So in the text, whether by word or our epistle. The apostles went up and down and preached Christ everywhere; that needeth no proof, unless you would have me to produce the whole book of the Acts of the Apostles. But they did not preach only, but write, and both by the instinct of the Holy Spirit, who guided their journeys, and moved them to write epistles. For being often absent from churches newly planted, and heresies arising, or some contentions, which could not be avoided among weak Christians, God overruled these occasions for the profit of the church in after ages. Upon one occasion or another, they saw a necessity to write, ana'nken e'chon: Jude 3, It was needful for me to write unto you.' As in the Old Testament, God himself delivered the law with great majesty and terror, and afterward caused the same to be written on

tables of stone for the constant use of his people; and the prophets first uttered their prophecies, and then wrote them; so the apostles first preached evangelical doctrine, and then consigned it to writing for the use of all ages. And though all things delivered by them were not delivered in one sermon or one epistle, yet, by degrees, the canon of the New Testament was constituted, and made perfect by the writings of the evangelists and apostles.

Prop. 5. That now, when they are long since gone to God, and we cannot receive from them the doctrine of life by word of mouth, we must stick to the scriptures or written word. (1.) Because we are taught to do so by Christ and his apostles. Christ always appealeth to the writings of the Old Testament, both against traditions, which he condemneth, Mat. xv. 2, and against pretended revelations, Luke xvi. 31, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded to repent if one should come from the dead.' And the apostles still have recourse to this proof: Acts xxvi. 22, Witnessing no other things than the prophets and Moses did say should come to pass.' And when they pleaded they were eye and ear witnesses, and so their testimony was valuable, yet they say ye have bebaio'teron lo'gon, a surer word of prophecy, whereunto ye shall do well to take heed,' 2 Peter i. 19. Now, how can we do better than to imitate these great examples? (2.) Because these things were written for our sakes: 1 John i. 4, These things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.' The apostles being to leave the world, did know the slipperiness of man's memory, and the danger of corrupting Christian doctrine, if there were not a sure authentic record left; therefore they wrote, and so fully that nothing is wanting to complete our joy and happiness. (3.) Because the scriptures are perfect. The perfection of scripture is known by its end and intended use, which is to give us a knowledge of those things which concern our faith, duty,

and happiness. (1st.) Our faith in Christ. If there be enough written for that end, we need not unwritten traditions to complete our rule. Now St John telleth us he might have written more things, But these things are written that ye might believe in the Son of God, and have life through his name,' John xx. 30, 31. Certainly nothing is wanting to beget a faith in Christ; the object is sufficiently propounded, the warrant or claim is laid down in the new covenant, and the encouragements to believe are clear and strong. What would men have more? so that here is a perfect rule, perfect in its kind, and for its proper use. (2d.) For our duty; that is sufficiently provided for. The apostle telleth us that the grace of God, take it objectively for the grace of the gospel, or subjectively for grace in our hearts, teacheth us: if you mean objective grace, it prescribeth, directeth; if of subjective grace, it persuadeth and exciteth what to do, to live soberly, righteously, godly, in the present world,' Titus ii. 12. There are all the branches of man's duty enumerated: soberly relateth to self-government; righteously, to our carriage towards our neighbour; godly, to our commerce and communion with God. Now, in the word of God what is there wanting that belongeth either to worship, or justice, or personal holiness? Therefore certainly we need no other rule, for it layeth down whatsoever men are bound to do in all ages and places of the world, and in whatsoever circumstances God shall put them. And so it is fit to be the law of the universal king and lawgiver; yea, it is so perfect, that whatever other way is set up, it presently dasheth against those notions that we have or should have of God and his service, and worship; or it infringeth or perverteth the liberty and nature of man. (3d.) For our happiness, that doctrine and institution which is able to make us wise unto salvation is enough for us, but so the holy scriptures are said to do: 2 Tim. iii. 15, Thou hast known the

holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through the faith which is in Christ Jesus.' Nay, afterward, ver. 17, The man of God is by them made perfect, and thoroughly furnished to every good work.'

If the scriptures do thoroughly direct men to know God in Christ, and save their own souls, why should we look any further? Now, they do not only furnish every private Christian with this knowledge; but the man of God, who is to instruct others, he needeth look no further, but is furnished out of the scripture with all things necessary to discharge his office. Therefore here we fix and rest, we have a sufficient rule, and a full record of all necessary Christian doctrine.

Use 1. The use of all is, let us not seek another rule than the word of God. Papists cry up unwritten traditions, to be received with equal respect and reverence as we receive the holy scriptures. But you, brethren, stand fast, holding the apostolical tradition: you cannot have it by word of mouth from them now, therefore you must stick to what is written, or else you cannot preserve yourselves from the frauds and impostures of antichrist. These apostolical writings have been received in all ages and times of the church from the beginning; and all disputes among Christians have been tried by them. None were allowed good or sincere Christians who doubted of the truth of them. But because we have to do with a people that will sacrifice all to the honour and interest of their church, and knowing they are not able to stand before the light of scriptures, have, to the no little prejudice of the Christian cause, done all that they can to weaken the authority, sufficiency, and perspicuity of them, that we might have no religion without the testimony and recommendation of their church; therefore I shall resume the matter and declare it afresh.

1. Mankind lying in darkness, and in the shadow of death, it was

necessary that one way or another God should reveal his mind to them, that we may know what belongeth to our duty and happiness, for our chief good and last end. Being altered by sin, we strangely mistake things, and put light for darkness, and darkness for light, good for evil, and evil for good; weighing all things in the balance of the flesh, which we seek to please. We confound both the names and natures of things, and wander in a maze of a thousand perplexities; therefore God in pity to mankind hath given us a sure direction in his word, which is a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our path,' Ps. cxix. 105. Mark the words of light' and lamp;' the use of a lamp is by night, and in the day we have the light of the sun; whether it be day or night with us, here we are taught how to carry ourselves. Mark again the words of path' and feet;' the one signifieth our way and general course, the other all our particular actions, so far as religion is concerned in them; we have directions in the word about them. Besides, man's condition is such that he needeth a supernatural remedy by a redeemer, which, depending upon the mere love and free grace of God, cannot be found out by natural light left to us; for that only can judge of things necessary, but not of such things as depend upon the mere pleasure of God. Therefore a divine revelation there must be.

2. Since it is necessary that God should some way or another reveal his mind to his people, it must be done by oracles, visions, dreams, or by extraordinary messengers, who by word of mouth might convey it to us; or else by writing, and by ordinary teachers, whose lips may preserve knowledge in the church. The former ways might suffice, while God saw fit to reveal but a few truths, and such as did not burden the memory; and men were long-lived and of great simplicity, and the church was confined within a small compass of ground, and not liable to so many miseries and changes as now in the latter ages. But when once God hath

spoken to us by his Son, these extraordinary ways ceased, Heb. i. 1, 2, God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last times spoken unto us by his Son.' As formerly God did speak polutro'pos, in divers manners, that is to say, by visions, oracles, dreams, &c., so polumeros, at sundry times, by several steps and degrees, he acquainted the world with the truths necessary for man to know, delivering them out by portions, not altogether at once, till he came who had the Spirit without measure,' John iii. 34. The prophets, to whom God revealed himself before by visions, oracles, dreams, or the coming of the Spirit upon them, had the Spirit ek me'trou, by measure, to fit them for some particular errand or message on which God sent them. But when God sent his Son out of his bosom to reveal the whole doctrine of faith at once, and to declare his Father's will with full authority and power, he fixed and closed up the rule of faith. So it was not fit that after him there should come any extraordinary nuncios and ambassadors from heaven, or any other should be owned as infallible messengers, but such as he immediately sent abroad in the world to disciple the nations. Therefore all former extraordinary ways ceased, and we are left to the ordinary rule stated by Christ.

3. Being left to the ordinary rule, it was necessary it should be taught not only by word of mouth, but committed to writing; for Christ is ascended into heaven, and the apostles do not live for ever, and we have no men now that are immediately and divinely inspired; and ordinary pastors and teachers cannot make new articles of faith, but do only build on the apostles' foundation, 1 Cor. iii. 10, or that divinely inspired doctrine which they delivered to the church. Yea, that doctrine cannot well be preserved from oblivion and corruption without writing, therefore God accounted this the safest way. Those

things that are only delivered by word of mouth, or from hand to hand, may easily be changed, corrupted, or utterly lost. Certainly if you consider man's sloth, treachery, levity, and the many vile affections which may easily induce him to extinguish or corrupt the truth, which is contrary to them; you will see that it is necessary that there should be a sure authentic record, by which truth and error might be tried and distinguished. Yea, that the church, which is dispersed through out the world, might have truth at hand, and particular believers have this doctrine ever by them for their comfort and use; it being the property of a blessed man to delight in the law of God, and to exercise himself therein day and night,' Ps. i. 2. In short, while the apostles were living it was good to take the tradition from their mouth; but now they are dead, we take it from their writings. Surely if God saw some writing necessary when those extraordinary ways we spoke of before were in use, and the church of the Old Testament was in a much quieter state than the church of the New,--I say, if some writing were necessary then, it is more necessary now; for the Christian church is more exposed to dreadful storms of persecution, the deceits of heretics of all sorts, especially to the frauds of antichrist, which we are forewarned of in this chapter, and are detected and discovered by their contrariety to the written word.

4. This truth being written, it is both a safe and a full rule for us to walk by. It is a safe rule, because it is written by the apostles and evangelists, holy men moved by the Holy Ghost. The apostles did not lose their infallibility when they committed what they preached to writing: the same Spirit that assisted them in delivering the doctrine by word of mouth assisted them also when they delivered it by writing; and it is a full and sufficient rule, because it containeth all things which are necessary for men to believe and do in order to eternal life.

Let them name what is necessary beyond what is recommended there, or may be deduced from thence. Yea, it doth contain not only all the essential but also the integral parts of the Christian religion; and therefore nothing can be any part of our religion which is not there. The direction of old was, Isa. viii. 20, To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.' Everything was then tried by Moses and the prophets, and everything must be now tried by the prophets and apostles, which is our foundation of faith, worship, and obedience, Eph. ii. 20.

5. That which we blame in the Papists is, that they cry up a private, unproved, unwritten tradition of their own, as of equal authority with this safe and full rule which is contained in the written word of God. Their crime and fault may be considered partly with respect to the object and matter, that these traditions are not indifferent customs, but essential points, necessary to faith and Christian practice; and so though a Christian be never so thorough and sound in his obedience to the word of God, and true to the baptismal covenant, yet if he submitteth not to these unwritten traditions, he wants some point necessary to faith and practice, and so to life eternal, which is contrary to Mark xvi. 16, He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; and he that believeth not shall be damned;' and John xvii. 3, This is life eternal, to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.' Partly as to the subject, as they make their own faction to be the only keepers of these things, and that nothing is to be owned as apostolical tradition but what is delivered as such by their authority; which is to leave the church to the tyranny and usurpation of a corrupt faction, to declare for apostolical tradition any thing which serveth their ends and interests, and for which no true

historical evidence is produced. Now the unjust and fraudulent practices which they have used to promote this usurpation over the churches of Christ rendered them of all men most unfit to be trusted in this kind. Partly with respect to the manner; they will have these things received pari reverentia et pietatis affectu--with the same reverence and pious affection with which we receive the holy scriptures; and so man's post is set by God's, and unproved traditions equalled with doctrines of faith. Their opinion is bad enough, but their practice is worse, for there they show they value these things more than the scriptures, as superstition always aboundeth in its own things. Did ever any of their doctors say the same things of traditions which they take the boldness to say of scripture? Did they ever call them pen and inkhorn, or parchment divinity, a nose of wax, a dumb rule, an obscure and ambiguous doctrine? These blasphemies they vent boldly against the scripture, but did they ever speak thus of tradition? And again, their common people are a thousand times better instructed in their traditions than in the doctrine of salvation; they skill more of Lent, and ember-weeks, &c., than they truly understand the doctrine of man's misery and remedy. And call you this equal reverence and pious affection to the scriptures and traditions? Partly because they would never give us a perfect catalogue of unwritten traditions necessary to be observed by all Christians; it may be lest they should amaze the people with the multitude of them, or else that the people may not know how many of their doctrines are destitute of scripture proof and so they plainly be discovered to be imposers on the belief of the Christian world.

6. Though we blame this in Papists, yet we reject not all tradition.

[1.] Because scripture itself is a tradition, as we proved before, and is conveyed to us by the most credible means, which we have no reason

to doubt of. The scriptures of the Old Testament were preserved by the Jews, to whom were committed the oracles of God.' Rom. iii. 2. And Protestants receive all the books which they admitted into their canon. And for the books of the New Testament, the Christian church hath received them as the writings of those whose names they bear, and by the constant universal tradition of the church they are transmitted to us; and we have no more reason to doubt of them than we do of statutes and laws made by kings and parliaments who lived long before we had a being. Yea, we may be much more confident, as the matter is of greater weight and consequence, and these writings have the signature and stamp of God's Spirit on them, and have been blessed by God to the converting and sanctifying of many souls; and have been delivered down to us by a succession of believers unto this very day: and by them Christianity hath been preserved in the world, notwithstanding the wickedness of it; and hath held up head against all the encounters of time. The persecutions of adverse powers have not suppressed it, nor the disputes of enemies silenced the profession of it; but still from age to age God's truth is received and transmitted to posterity.

[2.] Because the proof of Christianity depending upon matters of fact, chiefly Christ's rising from the dead, it can only be proved by a testimony, which in so extraordinary a case must be made valuable and authorised to the world by the miracles accompanying it. Now, the notice of these things is brought to us by tradition, which being un questionable, giveth us as good ground of faith as it did to them that lived in the apostles' time, and heard their doctrine, and saw their miracles. God's wonderful works were never intended for the benefit of that age only in which they were done, but for the benefit also of those that should hear of them by any credible means whatsoever, Ps. cxlv. 4, Joel i. 3, Ps. lxx. 3-7. These things were told them that they

might set their hope in God,' &c.

[3.] Because there are some doctrines drawn by just consequence from scripture, but are the more confirmed to us when they are backed with constant church usage and practice; as baptism of infants, Lord's day, singing of psalms in our public worship, &c.

[4.] Because there are certain words which are not found in scripture indeed, yet agreeable thereunto, and are very useful to discover the frauds of heretics, as trinity, divine providence, consubstantial, procession of the Holy Ghost, satisfaction, &c.

[5.] We reject not all church history, or the records of ancient writers concerning the providences of God in their days in owning the gospel, which make much for our instruction in manners, and are helps to encourage us to put our trust in God.

[6.] There are certain usages and innocent customs or circumstances, common or sacred, and other actions, which we despise not, but acknowledge and receive as far as their own variable nature and condition requireth; not rejecting them because anciently practised, nor regarding them when the general law of edification requireth the omission of them. But that which we detest is, that the traditions of men should be made equal in dignity and authority with the express revelation of God. Yea, that manifest corruptions and usurpations, as making Rome the mistress of other churches, and superinducing the Pope as the head of the universal visible church, and the vicar of Christ, without his leave and appointment, and such like other points, should be obtruded upon the world as apostolical traditions, and to be received with like religious reverence as we do articles of faith set down in scripture. This is that we cannot sufficiently abhor, as apparently false and destructive to Christianity.

The propositions drawn out of the text in this sermon are these:--

1. Whatever assurance we have of God's preserving us in the truth, yet we are bound to use diligence and caution.

2. Our diligence and caution is to be employed about this, that we may stand fast in the faith of Christ, and the profession and practice of godliness.

3. That the means of standing fast in the faith of Christ and the profession and practice of godliness is by holding the traditions which were taught by the holy apostles.

4. That while the apostles were in being there were two ways of delivering the truth--by word of mouth and writing.

5. That now when they are long since gone to G-od, and we cannot receive from them the doctrine of life by word of mouth, we must stick to the scriptures or written word.

EDITORIAL NOTE

ON

SMECTYMNUUS REDIVIVUS.

ACCORDING to the advertisement which has been long before the public, this volume should have contained the treatise called Smectymnuus Redivivus. That advertisement was prepared by the late Mr Nichol under the impression that that was a treatise by Dr Manton, different from the work of the five divines whose initials formed the name Smectymnuus. But it was not so. It was simply that work re-issued, with a very short preface by Dr Manton. It is not surprising that Mr Nichol should have been misled by the title; for certainly it is not usual to designate a reprint of a book by the name of its author with the adjunct Redivivus, while it is not unusual for an author, professing to write in the same spirit in which one of his predecessors had written, to adopt his name with that adjunct appended to it. If we saw an announcement of the publication of a book with the title Junius Redivivus, we should not expect it to be a new edition of the famous Letters,' but a new work by one who proposed to treat the political topics of the present day in a similar way to that in which Junius treated those of his day. Such an expectation would be reasonable; but in the present case it would be erroneous.

It may be noticed that the same mistake was made long ago by Anthony à Wood; and, indeed, it is probable that it was he who misled Mr Nichol. Being aware, then, that the treatise was not Dr Manton's, the Editor has not thought himself entitled to include it among his works. It is enough to subjoin the preface, which was all that Manton contributed to the treatise as reprinted. The work was originally published in 1641,

in answer to Bishop Hall's advocacy of the divine right of Episcopacy. It authors were Stephen Marshall, Edmund Calamy, Thomas Young, Matthew Newcomen, and VVilliam Spurstow, whose initials were combined to form the pseudonym Smectymnuus. In 1653 it was reprinted, as we have stated, with the following preface by Dr Manton:--

TO THE READER.

GOOD READER,--Solomon told us long since, that there is no end of many books, Eccles, xii. 12. Scripturiency (it seemeth) is no novel humour, but abounded then, even when the means of transmitting knowledge was more difficult. If there were cause for the complaint then, there is much more now, since the press hath helped the pen; every one will be scribbling, and so better books are neglected, and lie like a few grains of corn under a heap of chaff and dust. Usually books are received as fashions; the newest, not the best and most profitable, are most in esteem; insomuch that really learned and sober men have been afraid to publish their labours, lest they should divert the world from reading the useful works of others that wrote before them. I remember Dr Altingius, [262] a terse and neat spirit, stood out the battle of twenty years' importunity, and would not yield to divulge anything upon this fear. Certainly, reader, it is for thy profit some times to look back and consult with them that first laboured in the mines of knowledge, and not always to take up what cometh next to hand. In this controversy of discipline many have written, but not all with a like judgment and strength, which I believe hath been no small rock of offence, and stone of stumbling to the adversaries, who are hardened with nothing so much as a weak defence of the truth; as Austin complaineth, [263] that when he was a Manichee, he had had too too often the victory put into his hands by the defences of weak and unskilful Christians. This work, which the stationer hath now revived

(that it may not be forgotten, and, like a jewel, after once showing, shut in the cabinet of private studies only), was penned by several worthy divines of great note and fame in the churches of Christ, under the borrowed and covered name of Smectymnuus, [264] which was some matter of scorn and exception to the adversaries; as the Papists objected to Calvin, his printing his Institutions under the name of Alcunius, and to Bucer his naming himself Aretius Felinus, though all this without ground and reason, the affixion of the name to any work being a thing indifferent, for there we must not consider so much the author as the matter, and not who said it, but what; and the assumption of another name not being infamous, but where it is done out of deceit, and to another's prejudice, or out of shame because of guilt, or fear to own the truths which they should establish. I suppose the reverend authors were willing to lie hid under this onomastic, partly that their work might not be received with prejudice, the faction against which they dealt arrogating to themselves a monopoly of learning, and condemning all others as ignorants and novices not worthy to be heard; and partly that they might not burthen their frontispiece with a voluminous nomenclature, it not being usual to affix so many names at length to one treatise.

For the work itself speaketh its own praise, and is now once more subjected to thy censure and judgment. This second publication of it was occasioned by another book for vindication of the ministry by the Provincial Assembly of London, wherein there are frequent appeals to Smectymnuus. Though otherwise I should have judged the reprinting seasonable; for the Lord hath now returned us to such a juncture of time wherein there is greater freedom of debate, without noise and vulgar prejudice; and certainly if the quarrel of Episcopacy were once cleared and brought to an issue, we should not be so much in the dark

in other parts of discipline, the conviction of an error by solid grounds being the best way to find out the truth. Reformations carried on with popular tumults, rather than rational conviction, seldom end well; though the judgment of God be to be observed in pouring contempt upon those which are partial in His law, yet the improvident leaps which a people are wont to make upon such occasions lay the foundation of a lasting mischief. I hope, that by the review of these matters we shall come to know more of the Lord's counsel for the ordering of his house; or at least that, by weighing what may be said on all sides, we shall learn more [265] to truth-it in love, which is the unfeigned desire of him who is thine in the Lord,

Tho. Manton.

Newington, June 23, 1653.

THE END OF VOL. V.

[262] Videbat enim passim laborari mole et copia variorum in hoc genere commentariorum, novis editionibus ancipitem reddi eorum delectum; sed meliores etiam, id est, veteres illos et probatos, auctores e studiosorum manibus extrudi,' &c.--Praefat. Scriptorum Theolog, Henric. Alting.

[263] Quaedam noxia victoria pasene mihi semper in disputationibus proveniebat cum Christianis imperitis.'--August. contra Manich., cap. 19.

[264] Mr Steven Marshall, Mr Edmund Calamy, Dr Thomas Young, Mr Matthew Newcomen, Dr William Spurstow.

[265] Aletheu'ein en aga'pe.'--Eph. iv. 14.

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